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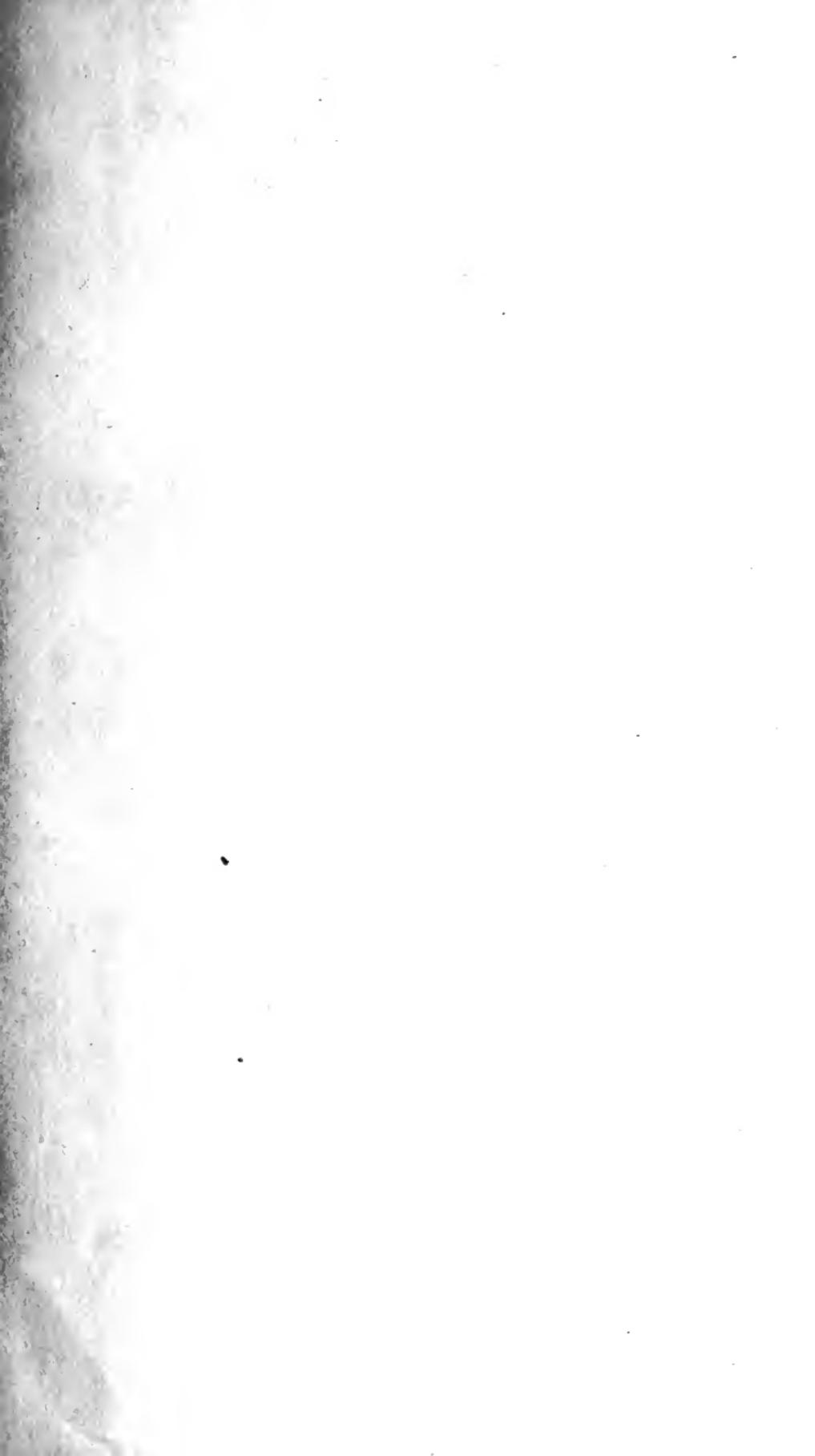
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See Vol. 15. P. 297. —

SACRED PATHS;

OR

LIFE IN PROSPECT OF IMMORTALITY.

17

“ Nathaniel saith, whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.”

BOSTON:

JOSEPH DOWE, 22 COURT STREET.

M DCCC XLI.

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P R E F A C E .

THERE are moments of leisure, on each Sabbath, and during the short intervals of business, through the week, when many are induced to read religious books, if the subjects are presented in a condensed, a practical, and attractive form, subjects which will suggest religious topics, and furnish thought for family conversation.

It is the design of this little Manual to furnish such topics. In its preparation, such has been gleaned, from the extensive field of Christian theology, as was thought would aid the advancement of religious knowledge

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and piety — and it is believed, that on whatever page the reader may turn, he will find sentiments eminently devotional and instructive, and forcibly inculcating practical religion.

Should it be the means of increasing the motives to devotion, and strengthening the bonds of Christian charity, its design will have been accomplished.

CONTENTS.

MEDITATION I.	
“ Christ formed within us.”	11
MEDITATION II.	
“ And your life is hid with Christ in God.” . .	13
MEDITATION III.	
“ Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself,” &c.	15
MEDITATION IV.	
“ Charity suffereth long and is kind.”	17
MEDITATION V.	
“ A stranger intermeddleth not with their joy.” .	19
MEDITATION VI.	
“ But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,” &c.	21
MEDITATION VII.	
“ He went into a solitary place and there prayed.”	25
MEDITATION VIII.	
“ Showing the Lord’s death till he come.” . .	30
MEDITATION IX.	
“ When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee.”	38
MEDITATION X.	
“ Which hope we have as an anchor to the soul.”	41
MEDITATION XI.	
“ The Lord will be with us.”	43
MEDITATION XII.	
“ He is precious.”	45
MEDITATION XIII.	
“ The brightness of his glory.”	47
MEDITATION XIV.	
“ The love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.”	49
MEDITATION XV.	
“ For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”	51

MEDITATION XVI.	
“Present with the Lord.”	53
MEDITATION XVII.	
“Judge not that ye be not judged.”	55
MEDITATION XVIII.	
“The earth is mine and the fulness thereof.”	56
MEDITATION XIX.	
“Bear ye one another’s burdens.”	58
MEDITATION XX.	
“Confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims.”	60
MEDITATION XXI.	
“Be ye followers of Christ.”	62
MEDITATION XXII.	
“Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”	64
MEDITATION XXIII.	
“I am the light of the world.”	66
MEDITATION XXIV.	
“Believe not every spirit.”	68
MEDITATION XXV.	
“Let no one say, I am tempted of God.”	70
MEDITATION XXVI.	
“Thy kingdom come.”	72
MEDITATION XXVII.	
“We will serve the Lord.”	74
MEDITATION XXVIII.	
“I have given you an example.”	77
MEDITATION XXIX.	
“And he went into a solitary place and there prayed.”	80
MEDITATION XXX.	
“Thou compassest my path.”	82
MEDITATION XXXI.	
“Behold, ye count them worthy which endure.”	84
MEDITATION XXXII.	
“For if ye suffer with him, ye shall also rise with him.”	86
MEDITATION XXXIII.	
“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.”	88

MEDITATION XXXIV.	
“ Consider the lilies.”	90
MEDITATION XXXV.	
“ Ye are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”	92
MEDITATION XXXVI.	
“ Fear not, for I am with thee.”	94
MEDITATION XXXVII.	
“ I, even I, am he that comforteth you.”	96
MEDITATION XXXVIII.	
“ They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.”	98
MEDITATION XXXIX.	
“ For no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth unto himself.”	100
MEDITATION XL.	
“ Let us meditate upon thy works, O Lord.”	102
MEDITATION XLI.	
“ Pray without ceasing.”	104
MEDITATION XLII.	
“ The spirit of God dwelleth within us.”	106
MEDITATION XLIII.	
“ Who is he, that has resisted the Almighty and been at peace with him.”	109
MEDITATION XLIV.	
“ Rebuke with all gentleness.”	111
MEDITATION XLV.	
“ Oh thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?”	113
MEDITATION XLVI.	
“ On their journey he entered a village called Bethany ; and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house.”	115
MEDITATION XLVII.	
“ Though clouds and darkness are round about thee, yet justice and mercy are the habitation of thy throne.”	117
MEDITATION XLVIII.	
“ Be temperate in all things.”	119

MEDITATION XLIX.	
“ Be free, but use not your liberty for an occasion of evil.”	120
MEDITATION L.	
“ Perfect love casteth out fear.”	122
MEDITATION LI.	
“ Ye must be born again.”	124
MEDITATION LII.	
“ Fear not; for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”	126
MEDITATION LIII.	
“ Be content with such things as ye have.” . .	128
MEDITATION LIV.	
“ Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”	130
MEDITATION LV.	
“ Commune with thine own heart.”	132
MEDITATION LVI.	
“ When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ? ”	135
MEDITATION LVII.	
“ Be not conformed to this world.”	137
MEDITATION LVIII.	
“ That no man should be moved by these afflic- tions.”	139
MEDITATION LIX.	
“ Lead us not into temptation.”	144
PRAYERS.	147
DEVOTIONAL POETRY.	205

SACRED PATHS.

MEDITATION I.

“Christ formed within us.”

TRUE religion is an union of the soul with God, a participation of the divine nature, the image of God drawn upon the soul; or as in the language of the apostle, it is *Christ formed in the soul the hope of glory.*

The love, which the true Christian bears to God and goodness, is prompted by the instructions of a new nature; his religious exercises are the proper emanations of a divine life, the natural employments of the new-born soul. What our Saviour said of himself is in some degree applicable to his true followers—*It is their meat and their drink to do their Father's will.*

As the natural appetite requires food,

though we should not reflect on the necessity of it for the sustenance of life — so is the Christian carried by a natural propensity to that which is good and virtuous.

Such a life is truly termed *divine*, not only in regard to its fountain and original, having God for its author, and being wrought in the souls of men by the power of the Holy Spirit.

But also in regard to its nature, religion being a resemblance of the divine perfections, the image of the Almighty shining in the soul of man, it is a real participation of his nature, a beam of the eternal light, a drop of the eternal ocean of goodness; and they who are endowed with it may be said to have *God dwelling in their souls, and Christ formed within them.*

MEDITATION II.

“ And your life is hid with Christ in God.”

As the animal life consisteth in that narrow and confined love which terminates on a man’s self, and in his progress towards those things that are pleasing to nature ; so the divine life stands in a universal affection, and in control of our natural passions ; thus they may never be able to betray us into those things which we know to be sinful.

Faith being the root of the divine life, its chief branches are love to God, charity to man. Faith has the same place in the divine life that sense has in the natural ; being indeed nothing else but a kind of sense or feeling, persuasion of spiritual things, extending itself into all divine truth.

The love of God is that affectionate sense of the divine perfections which makes the soul resign and sacrifice itself wholly unto him, desiring above all things to please him, and delighted in nothing so much as in fellowship and communion with him, and being

ready to suffer anything for his sake, or at his pleasure. This affection may have its first rise from the favors and mercies of God towards us, but in its growth and progress it will transcend such particular considerations, and establish itself on his infinite goodness, manifested in all the works of creation and providence.

A soul thus in possession of divine love, must necessarily be enlarged towards all mankind, in a sincere and unbounded affection, because of the relation they have to God, being his creatures, and bearing in some degree his image.

This is that charity under which all the parts of justice, and all the duties we owe to our neighbor, are eminently comprehended. For he who truly loves the whole world, will be as truly concerned in the interests of every one, and will resent any evil that befalls another, as having happened to himself.

MEDITATION III.

“Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself,” &c.

HE is duly abstracted from the body, having control of the inferior appetites, or such a temper and disposition of mind, as makes a man despise and abstain from all pleasures and delights of sense or fancy, which are in themselves sinful, or which tend to extinguish or lessen our relish of more divine or intellectual pleasures.

These are the highest perfections that man is capable of; the very foundation of heaven laid in the soul; and whoever has attained them, need not pry into the hidden rolls of God’s decrees, or search the volumes of heaven to know what is determined about his everlasting condition; but he may find a copy of God’s thoughts concerning him written in his own breast.

His love to God will give him assurance of God’s favor to him; and those beginnings of happiness, which he feels in the conformity of the powers of his soul to the nature of

God, and compliance with his will, are a sure pledge that his felicity shall be perfected and continued through all the ages of eternity. It has reasonably been said, “I had rather see the real impression of a God-like nature upon my own soul, than have a vision from heaven, or an angel sent to tell me that my name is enrolled in the book of life.”

The secret mysteries of the divine life can never be sufficiently expressed,—language, words cannot reach them. They can only be understood by those souls that are inwardly awakened to a sense and relish of spiritual things. *There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.*

The life of religion can be better expressed in actions than by words,—actions better represent the inward principle from whence they proceed. The best measure of those gracious endowments may be taken from the deportment of those in whom they reside,—as they are perfectly exemplified in the life of the Saviour, whose business was to teach by his practice what he required of others.

MEDITATION IV.

“Charity suffereth long and is kind.”

THE excellence of Christian charity will be readily acknowledged. What can be more noble than a heart enlarged to embrace the whole world, whose wishes and designs are aimed at the good and welfare of the universe, and which considereth every man's interest as its own?

He who loveth his neighbor as himself can never entertain an evil thought, or be wanting in expressions of bounty; he had rather suffer a thousand wrongs than be guilty of one, and never accounts himself so happy, as when some one has been benefitted by him.

This inward goodness and kindness of spirit reflects a certain sweetness and serenity upon the countenance, and makes it amiable and lovely. It inspirereth the soul with a noble resolution and courage, and makes it capable of effecting the highest things.

It delights the soul to feel itself thus enlarged, and to be delivered from disquieting

and deformed passions, and become gentle and benign,— to become a partaker in the happiness of others, their inward endowments and outward prosperity.

Surely, next to the love and enjoyment of God, that ardent charity and affection where-with devout souls embrace each other, is justly to be reckoned as the greatest felicity of those regions above; and did it universally prevail in the world, it would anticipate that blessedness, and make us taste of the joys of heaven upon earth.

MEDITATION V.

“A stranger intermeddleth not with their joy.”

HOLINESS is the right temper, the vigorous and healthful constitution of the soul. The understanding can discern what is good, and the will can cleave unto it. The affections are divinely impressed, and touched by a sense of invisible things. On what a sure foundation is his happiness built, whose soul is in the possession of divine love, — whose will is transformed into the will of God, and whose greatest desire is, that his Maker should be pleased.

Never does a soul know what solid joy and substantial pleasure is, till, once being weary of itself, it renounces all property, gives itself up to the Author of its being, and feels itself to have become hallowed and devoted, and can say from inward sense and feeling, *my beloved is mine*, I account all his interest mine own; *and I am his*, I am contented to be anything for him, and care not for myself, but that I may serve him.

The Christian, who has found such a temper, can find pleasure in all the dispensations of Providence. Temporal enjoyments would have another relish, when he should taste the divine goodness in them, and consider them as tokens of love sent by his heavenly Father.

Chastisements, though they be not joyous, would lose their sting, — the rod as well as the staff would comfort him, — he would kiss the hand that was smiting him, and gather sweetness from its severity.

MEDITATION VI.

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,” &c.

How solemn and sublime is the thought, that we are alone with God! Such nearness has no parallel in heaven itself.

It is as if all the spirits around the eternal throne were moved back to the borders of Emanuel’s land, whenever a new spirit was about to enter,—that the first interview might be with God only, and its first emotions seen only by Him. Approaching our heavenly Father in the closet has all the secrecy and none of the overwhelming solemnity of such an interview.

The devout soul there communes with the Father alone, as if it alone engaged all his notice. It has God wholly to itself, and may unbosom and plead as if He had no one else to attend unto at the moment.

Could we have entered to pray before the mercy-seat, what would it have been, compared with such a meeting in the closet,

alone with God our Father? Such being our privilege, why should we be reluctant to pray? or why should we be cold or heartless in prayer? Secret prayer is a private interview with God, as real as that in the bush in Midian.

How readily, therefore, should we welcome even such visits from God as the patriarch was favored with, and consider even one visit on his part to be an act of infinite love; how ought we to value the privilege of daily communing with our Father in secret, being noticed, heard, and remembered by Him for good. There we are allowed to say to our heavenly Father all that we could desire, were we praying on the very spot where arch-angels adore and redeemed spirits sing.

There is no note on the harp of Gabriel more welcome to Jehovah than the cry of a penitent for mercy. The first condition of coming to God is to believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of all those who diligently seek him.

Are not all the armies of heaven rolling from their harps the anthems of eternity? Are not they noticed and approved? Hear

then the voice of God out-speaking the chorus of heaven! Thus saith the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity, unto that man will I look who is of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word.

Surely God dwells with the devout and prayerful, as truly as he inhabits eternity,—willingly and with delight. How cheerfully and readily, therefore, should we enter our closets, and pray to our Father who seeth in secret, and who rewardeth openly. Had Job known all this as clearly as we do, how would he have prized such nearness and communion with God.

When he exclaimed, “O that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to his seat,” Job would gladly have gone anywhere to find God. Had his seat been on the coldest and most lofty mountain of Lebanon, and its summit quaking like Sinai, Job would have climbed it to meet his God in mercy. Had his seat been in the most distant wilderness, or at the uttermost parts of the sea, Job would most cheerfully have travelled it, to order his cause before the Lord. All this is perfectly consistent with

the patriarch's character. But we have no such questions to ask; well do we know where God is to be found. We know where he waiteth to be gracious.

Our heavenly Father is always to be found at our own home; the most intimate communion can be had in the closet at home,—more intimate than was found in the ancient temple, even by those who travelled from Dan to Beersheba to appear before God in Zion.

Our salvation indeed begins when we begin to seek it with our whole heart; and it will go on in holiness and happiness, just in proportion as we cultivate devotional habits. In fact, a devotional spirit is itself one of the chief parts of personal salvation, and both the pledge and prelude to the whole.

It is when these are understood by the prayerful, that the closet becomes, like the house of God, the gate of heaven; and we obey the call to enter it with something of the same spirit in which to welcome the invitation of the Judge, when he shall say, “Come ye blessed, inherit the throne prepared for you.”

MEDITATION VII.

“He went into a solitary place and there prayed.”

JESUS went up into a mountain; and when the evening was come he was there alone,—not that he might watch the rising of the evening star, nor did he ascend the mountain that he might enjoy repose, although he needed rest, after having spent the day in healing the sick, and feeding the hungry, under the burning sun of Judea, and amid a crowded multitude. But he went up into a mountain apart to pray

And was this exercise less sublime than gazing on the gilded landscape and glaring firmament? We, who ascend mountains voluntarily and alone, do so, generally, to indulge a poetic or scientific taste, to commune with nature in silence and solitude.

Jesus ascended to pray; and by prayer to commune with God; a nobler communion than poets or philosophers ever had with nature in her majestic and lovely scenes. Still how few are alive to the sublimity of

devotional solitude. Praying in secret to the Father, who seeth in secret, is an exercise equally solemn and sublime, — but how little interest it excites to say of a man, that he is alone praying.

Say to a man of taste, that his favorite poet is alone amid the scenery of mountains and lakes, and immediately he will realize his emotions, and dwell with him in spirit amid clouds and cataracts, rocks and ruins, and feel as if he were more than mortal. But tell him he is alone praying, and that moment the charm is broken.

The penitent's eye, swimming in tears of contrition, and hardly daring to look up, even when alone before God, may be despised by man. But a broken and contrite spirit, O God, thou wilt not despise.

The astronomer, tracing the stars in their courses, and tracking the devious comet in its flight, is held to be a star of the first magnitude in mental genius, and strong in understanding. But the Christian, retired to pray, is held to be almost mean-spirited ; but not so in the eye of Providence. Often when alone praying, the Christian finds his

closet the very gate of heaven, and feels as if open vision would follow his intimate communion with God and the Lamb.

Christ went up into a mountain because he had no home or closet. To those who have both, his command is, enter into thy closet. His example proves that the fatigue of labor must not prevent secret prayer. Christ had spent the day until evening in active exertion among the multitude that followed into the wilderness.

During the whole day, he had been under a burning sun in a sandy desert, and had afterward to ascend the mountain alone. And even there, neither shelter nor refreshment awaited him ; but though thus exhausted and exposed, he closed the labors of the day by prayer. He had no domestic comforts, — neither shelter nor pillow ; yet he went apart to pray. He will remind the prayerless of this fact.

The Saviour's example proves that whatever great exertions for the poor and afflicted, must not set aside secret prayer. He closed a day of effort on behalf of suffering humanity, by going apart to pray. According-

ly, while diligence in business is expressly enjoined, fervency of spirit in prayer, rests upon the same high and unalterable authority. His example proves that no strength of character or grace can render devotional solitude unnecessary. He, who had the spirit without measure, — who knew no sin, — who was full of grace and truth, and in whom the prince of darkness could find nothing to work upon, — He went apart to pray ; and surely nothing that we have attained can render us independent of secret devotion.

Thus in praying, as in all practical duties, the Saviour was acting as the example of his followers. He had taught his disciples to pray ; and he illustrated and enforced the lesson by his own devotional habits. When he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them.

Our Saviour knew the worth of the soul, and what was in man, when he enjoined devotional solitude upon his disciples. For even in the best state of mind, it is necessary that the Christian should have seasons of secret retirement. The full-souled excla-

mation, with its tones and its tears, is fit only for the ear of God ; and when the witness of the spirit is strong, and the seal of the spirit is bright ; when the soul is borne away among the deep things of God and the scenes of eternity,—we must be alone, or lose one half of the enjoyment.

Even friends, however endeared, would be a check at these sacred moments, on the full flow of devotional feelings, and on the flush of a hope full of immortality.

Solitude is the real element of these raptures. The Christian is alone with an innumerable company of angels, with the spirits of just men made perfect. God seeth and heareth in secret.

MEDITATION VIII.

“ Showing the Lord’s death till he come.”

By commemorating the death of Christ at his table, and remembering the dead in Christ, and anticipating the unborn, who shall be given to Christ, we forget, in some measure, our own fears and trials. We feel ourselves to be a part of the great army, the first companies of which are now crowned with victory, and the last sure to be more than conquerors through God and the Lamb.

When a Christian thinks only of himself, and for himself, he is easily discouraged, and feels ready to sink. But when he considers himself as one of God’s family, and remembers how many have arrived at his kingdom in safety, and how many are still laboring under the cares and trials of this life, he feels that he too may overcome.

While he looks only at himself, he can hardly see how the Saviour can take any lively or constant interest in him ; or how the Holy Spirit can bear with his infirmities ; but

when he reflects that the Great Shepherd's flock is too large to be forsaken by a good shepherd, or by the spirit, the comforter,— he feels that although the weakest of the lambs of the flock, he may still share in its shepherd's tenderness, and venture into all its green pastures and by all its still waters, in company.

When he looks only at his own trials, he can hardly see how a special providence should be interested in his case, or hold up his goings.

But when he considers how many have been guarded and guided, and how many need the same guidance and guardianship as himself, he feels that they are so many, that the God of love will not leave nor forsake them ; and thus he ventures to cast all his cares upon a wise and watchful Providence.

Thus he is encouraged to approach the Lord's table. His own sense of unfitness and unworthiness would keep him away, did he not see others continue to come, who confess the same,— he sees and feels that there is an intimate and inseparable connexion between the Christian's growth in grace and his adherence to the sacrament.

These indeed are not the highest motives for adhering to the sacramental table, but they are just and powerful motives. So also is the consideration, that your absence may injure or pain others. For by not communing with your brethren, you may prevent or retard their communion with God.

Some of your friends will miss you, and will be sure to be affected by it. Especially those who encouraged and welcomed you to the sacrament, and those also whom you may have encouraged and welcomed to it, cannot but wonder at your absence. We ought all to be better employed than in thinking of absent friends.

The remembrance of the Saviour ought to engross and absorb our whole souls. This you feel and confess. Let us not, then, divide or divert their hearts from Him by deserting them. Remember how we should have felt, had we missed them when we began to commune. And as their presence has often encouraged others, let ours encourage them.

There is more connexion between this tender regard to the feelings of others and communion with God, than seems generally understood. Many suppose that it is of lit-

tle consequence how they feel towards their brethren at the sacrament, or at any other place, if they are not at open variance with them. That it is generally acknowledged incompatible with communion with God. And whether acknowledged or not, it is found to be so both by offenders and the offended. Neither find much benefit at the Lord's table, while these heartburnings are unhealed.

This loss of enjoyment is not confined, however, to alienated brethren. It is also sustained by indifferent brethren; and in such a degree as should arouse them, even if they are unconscious of any studied indifference.

It is as much the design of the sacrament to promote the fellowship of the members with each other, as the fellowship of the members with the head. The unbroken bread is as truly an emblem of a united church, as the broken bread is of a crucified Redeemer.

It is not enough, therefore, simply to remember the Saviour, when we approach his table. Truly he should be the supreme object of our attention; but not to the exclu-

sion of the people. Christ is not jealous of brotherly love. A kind look or thought towards the brethren of a church will not displease him or distract us.

We indeed greatly mistake, when we suppose that we cannot interest ourselves in the church, while we are at the sacramental table; although we may each of us have so much to think of in our own particular case, that it would seem more than enough at the time.

When we are trying to commune with the Saviour for ourselves, our own hearts are so perverse, that any concern for our brethren may seem unreasonable and out of place. But may not a momentary assimilation of ourselves with our brethren be the most sure way of getting into communion with the Saviour himself?

Suppose he, who is accustomed to call them his brethren, should hide his face from us, till we from the very heart should acknowledge them as our brethren. Such may be the case with us. Paul evidently believed it to be certain, that believers could not comprehend the heights and depths, and lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, without

being rooted and grounded in mutual love. And without cheering and unfeigned love to the brethren, we cannot expect any enrapturing manifestation of the love of God.

It is as much in connexion with loving one another as with loving himself, that the Saviour promises to manifest himself to his disciples. This is as reasonable as it is authoritative; it is intimately connected with all the enjoyment which the sacrament is intended to produce.

The want of a truly right spirit toward the brethren, whatever other causes there may have been, has undoubtedly led to the loss of much sacramental enjoyment.

You may not have behaved ill,—no one may have had any reason to complain of your conduct, or spirit, as a communicant.

All this may be done and much more; you may never have refused to help the poor of the flock; still you may be destitute of charity. The question is, do you love the brethren for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in them, and because they are your brethren in Christ? This is the grand scripture reason for mutual love in the church.

If we love only a few who may happen to please us, and them chiefly for what they are to us, rather than for what they are to Christ, we overlook this reason, and make ourselves the centre of our affections.

We may not intend to do this, but it amounts to this, if we care little or nothing about those who are not our personal friends. We are bound to love all who love the Saviour.

It is not a sufficient answer to this, to say that we doubt the sincerity of some of our fellow-members of the church. This may be our own fault as it respects some of them.

They may be as worthy, or even more worthy than ourselves, if we knew them as well. And in case of those who are justly doubted, it is our duty to be faithful unto them. If you know, to a certainty, that any nominal brother is an immoral man, you are as much bound to reprove him, and to endeavor to bring the matter to an issue, as he is bound to reform.

It is not, however, from extreme cases that our neglect of brotherly love chiefly springs; but from our inattention to the law of that

love. The law of love, therefore, is exceedingly broad ; it embraces all the personal friends of the Saviour, because they are his friends. We are bound to love them, because He first loved them even as He loved us ; and because they love Him as truly and as sincerely as we do. We should feel and admit the claim, even were we to sit at the sacramental table in Africa or in India.

We could not by any effort go into a cold and jealous calculation of their comparative rank and worth. All such considerations would at once yield to the high consciousness, that we are associated with the friends of Jesus. And surely his friends are not less valuable at home !

It should be our desire to bring up at every sacrament from the chaos of feeling the light of immortality ; and to embody the light as an orb, which shall shine, as calmly and constantly and as brightly on the sacramental table, as the lamps of the temple shone on the altars of sacrifice and incense. For it is profitable to live in such habitual prospect of immortality, as shall render every sacrament a foretaste of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

MEDITATION IX.

“When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee.”

JESUS saw Nathaniel coming to him, and saith of him, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.” Conscious that he had never been with Jesus, he asks with surprise, “Whence knowest thou me?” and Jesus answered, “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee.”

Nathaniel chose the fig-tree as the place of his retreat. He chose it probably, not only because its large leaves would screen him from the rays of the sun, but conceal him from human inspection. For he wished to be alone. Who has not endured the loneliness of being with persons of no congeniality with their own views and feelings, who have checked and chilled every devotional sentiment?

Many, therefore, prefer retirement. But others, instead of being distracted and diverted when abroad, are aided and im-

pressed ; their thoughts being quickened, their fancy enlivened, by the displays of wisdom and goodness around them ; and can easily rise from things seen and temporal to things unseen and eternal.

They love the fig-tree ; and the wood, the garden, the corn-field, and the meadow, will bear witness to their devotion. Isaac was in the field at even-tide to meditate, and Peter was praying on the house-top.

But what was Nathaniel doing under the fig-tree ? It was something significant and easily recalled. There are facts in the lives of all which are susceptible of remembrance. To devout minds, there are places delightfully and sacredly interesting, because they have been none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.

Such was Bethel to Jacob, and Patmos to John, and the fig-tree to Nathaniel. He was probably reading the law and the prophets, or reflecting on some divine subject, or praying to the God of heaven ; or more probably he was indulging in all these successively, or intermingling them together ; for this is the business of retirement. For

surely solitude affords the best opportunity to try our state, to examine our characters, to detect our mistakes, to learn our dangers, and provide against them.

MEDITATION X.

“Which hope we have as an anchor to the soul.”

THE Christian is particularly distinguished by the possession of hope,— *having a good hope through grace*. Its goodness is to be seen in its certainty. Its usefulness is here expressed by a metaphor. We have this hope “as an anchor to the soul.” The force of the comparison is simple and easy.

We cast the anchor of the ship to keep her from being driven by the winds, and to this we liken the use of hope, in the common concerns and engagements of the Christian life. Without it we could be fixed, trusting in the Lord; but should be unstable and fluctuating. “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.”

The anchor holds the vessel in rough and tempestuous weather, when the mariner is unable to steer without danger of running on rocks and quicksands. The world we have to cross is a sea,—not always calm; persecutions, losses, troubles, await us; conflicts without and fears within.

He that walketh in darkness and hath no light, is to *trust in the Lord, and stay upon his God.* This David recommended to others. *Let Israel hope in the Lord.* This he enjoined upon his own soul. *Hope thou in God.*

We also read of the *patience of hope*, because hope is necessary to cheer and sustain it. In nature there are the wintry months, between the sowing and the reaping. In the Christian there is the prayer of faith, the fight of faith, the life of faith, before he receives the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul. There are also the perils of indulgence, of ease, of success in business, of wealth, of fame. Here also we are saved by hope.

What is the smile of man to the honor that cometh from God only? What is earth to a better country, even a heavenly? How came Moses to refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter? He had respect unto the recompense of reward.

MEDITATION XI.

“The Lord will be with us.”

FOR the relief of secret sorrow, and the preservation of deep-rooted joy, the only resource is to be found in heartfelt piety; the persuasion, that all things are in the hands of a Being infinitely wise and good; and the personal assurance, that the soul is safe in the care and keeping of the Father in heaven.

This truth is beautifully recognised by Solomon, in his sublime prayer in the dedication of the temple. “Whatsoever sore, or whatsoever sickness there be,” said the devout worshipper, “then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, when any man shall know his own sore and his own grief, the plague of his own heart, and shall spread forth his hands in this house; then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men.”

In the spirit of this affecting intercession, the Psalmist, from whom Solomon learned his lesson of devotion, had prayed, and what Christian does not fervently join in the prayer, “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.”

One Being only is the witness of our hearts; and He, blessed be his name, is our Father. To Him, then, let us go with our joys and our sorrows. Is any afflicted, let him pray. Is any merry, let him sing psalms of praise. Having this refuge, grief will not distract, nor joy ensnare us.

We shall pass safely through the vicissitudes of time, and shall be prepared by them for the unchanging scenes of eternity, where no sea of trouble shall toss and agitate our souls, nor any night close upon our heavenly joys.

MEDITATION XII.

“He is precious.”

THE true believer thinks of his heavenly Father, and his thoughts of him are fervent and pleasant. “My thoughts of him shall be sweet.” “How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them,—when I awake I am still with thee.” See how he employs his tongue. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

The impression made upon our feelings by an object preëminently interesting can hardly be restrained. The Bible is most precious, as it is the word of God, and reveals the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. Heaven is the most attractive, as the place in which we shall be with God, and behold his glory.

Our Lord promised to send the Holy Spirit to convince us of sin, and to glorify himself. Such is the Sabbath. It is named, in honor of him, the Lord’s day. It is to

bring him to our remembrance, as rising from the dead, and entering into his rest, after having finished the work that was given him to do.

His people hold communion with Him through the week; but week days are in some degree worldly days. They have some glimpses of Him, and some words from Him, in pressing through their ordinary concerns. But they want larger and more intimate intercourse with their best friend; and when the Sabbath comes they take Him to their retirement, and He manifests Himself unto them.

Such is the period of holy fellowship at his table. In reference to this, where is the believer, who has not been able to say, I sat under his shadow with delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste? In no other duty have we such views of Him as here. As a risen Saviour, He comes and shows us his hands and his feet, and assures us that because He lives we shall live also.

MEDITATION XIII.

“The brightness of his glory.”

LET us urge forward our spirits and make them approach the spiritual world ; and fix our minds upon immaterial things, till we clearly perceive their reality, and that all things are dreams and shadows beside them. When we look about us, and behold the beauty and harmony of the whole creation, let our thoughts from thence take their flight toward that infinite wisdom, which did at first produce, and doth still establish and uphold the same.

When we reflect upon ourselves, let us consider that we are not merely a curious and well-contrived engine, but that we possess a spiritual nature, capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying our Maker, *who is not far from every one of us.* We cannot open our eyes but we must behold some footsteps of his glory ; and we cannot turn them towards Him, but we find his intent upon us ;

and waiting to entertain the most intimate communion and fellowship with us.

Let us, therefore, endeavor to raise our minds to the clearest conceptions of the divine nature. Let us consider all that his works do declare, or his word doth discover of Him unto us ; and let us especially contemplate that visible representative of Himself, which was made in our own natures by his Son, *who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person* ; and who appeared in the world to discover at once what God is, and what we ought to be.

Let us represent Him unto our minds as we find Him described in the Gospel, and then shall we behold the perfections of the divine nature, though covered with the veil of human infirmities ; and when we have formed unto ourselves the clearest notion that we can have of a Being, infinite in power, in wisdom, and goodness ; the author and fountain of all perfections ; let us fix the eyes of our soul upon it, that our eyes may affect our heart, and while we “*are musing the fire will burn.*”

MEDITATION XIV.

“The love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.”

NOTHING is more powerful to engage our affections, than to find that we are beloved. Expressions of kindness are always pleasing and acceptable unto us; but to have the love of one who is altogether lovely, to know that the glorious Majesty of heaven hath a regard unto us, how must it delight us, and melt our hearts, and put our whole soul in raptures.

The word of God is full of the expressions of his love towards us, and all his works do loudly proclaim it. He gave us our being, and by preserving us in it, He doth renew the donation every moment. The account which we have of the Saviour’s life in the Gospel doth, throughout, present us with the story of his love,—all the troubles that He endured were the wonderful effects and evidences of it. And his last scene is it possible for us to remember, and question his kindness?

Here it is that we should fix our most solemn thoughts, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that we being established in love, may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

“ When to the cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary;
O Lamb of God, my sacrifice !
I must remember thee !

And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And mind and memory flee,
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me.”

MEDITATION XV.

“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

NEXT to the love and enjoyment of God, that affection, with which the righteous embrace each other, is justly to be considered the greatest felicity of the regions above,— and did it more generally prevail in the world, we should anticipate the blessedness, and have a taste of the joys of heaven upon earth.

All men stand in near relation to God, and have still so much of his image stamped upon them, as should excite our love and kindness toward them. They are not only his creatures, the workmanship of his hands, but such, of whom he taketh special care, and for whom he hath a tender regard. The meanest person which we behold is the offspring of heaven, a child of the Most High, who will have us to acknowledge him as one of his, and to embrace him with a sincere and cordial affection.

Christ says, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another.” And nothing is recorded to have been done by him, which was not designed for the good of man. All his miraculous works were instances of his goodness as well as of his power; and they benefited those on whom they were wrought, as well as they amazed the beholders. His charity was not confined to his kindred or relations, nor was his kindness swallowed up in the endearments of that peculiar friendship which He carried towards the beloved disciples.

Never did He deny any request, which tended to the good of those who asked it. Never did any depart from Him with a sad countenance, except that rich youth, who was sorrowful to hear that the kingdom of heaven stood at so high a rate, that he could not save his soul and his money too. And certainly our Saviour was troubled, to see that, when a price was put into his hand to get wisdom, he had no heart to improve it.

MEDITATION XVI.

“Present with the Lord.”

HAVE I not been invited and raised by the goodness of God, to some humble hope of His favor? Hast thou not revealed thyself as willing to be reconciled unto me? May I not indulge the thought, for the purpose of forming a due estimate of heaven? If to be forever with one saint or angel, would be worthy of all acceptation, what will it be to be forever with the innumerable company of angels, and with all the spirits of the just made perfect? If to be a doorkeeper in the house of God would be joy unspeakable, what must be the joy of being made kings and priests unto God? If to be forever with any one in heaven, would be certain and sublime happiness, what must be the certainty and sublimity of being *forever with the Lord?*

There is no idea of heaven dearer to the followers of Christ than this. All our ideas of it centre in seeing and being with the

Saviour. Even the cheering hope of a reunion with the spirits we love is enhanced by the thought of meeting them around the throne of God and the Lamb. In like manner, all the joys of heaven will and must have a similar influence on the redeemed. “Whom have I in heaven but thee?” is an exclamation that nothing there will stop or lessen, even when all that is within the veil is as visible as it is eternal.

MEDITATION XVII.

“Judge not that ye be not judged.”

LET us turn our eyes inward upon ourselves; for we can never err, or be too severe in sifting out, or condemning our own omissions of duty toward God, or our neglect of duty to our neighbor; neither can we be too cautious or sparing in censuring and estimating the actions and motives of others.

Let us form ourselves on this maxim of our Master, that we may be known to be his disciples by the candor of our sentiments, the equity of our conduct, and the beneficence of our actions.

We often suppose that we are following truth, while we follow only our own inclination, and love our neighbor as long as he agrees with us; but are out of all patience at the least difference or contradiction. “See not the mote in thy brother’s eye.” “Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

MEDITATION XVIII.

“The earth is mine and the fulness thereof.”

I NEED not your vain oblations, exclaims the Lord of Sabbaoth, when reproving the formal services of Israel, while their hearts were far from him.

Let no consideration of advantage lead you to do an evil thing, and in all your good actions have one desire only, — the glory of God. This alone sanctifies our will, and the springs whereby it moves; and God measures our actions by the dispositions of the heart, not by the worth or quality of the gift. “If ye give but a cup of cold water in my name, verily ye shall have your reward.” “*Charity seeks not her own.*” Charity looks upon God as the source of all good, and longs to be embraced in that immense ocean of blessedness.

To the Christian thus influenced all things are God’s; he takes no merit to himself for the most noble acts of self-denial, for the will to do, and the gifts themselves, come

from God, who is the only, the universal good, which should kindle within us the love of heaven and spiritual joys, and convince us that nothing earthly is worthy of our affections.

“Behold the happy earth rejoice ;
Around the world a Saviour’s voice
 Proclaims the word of love ;
The reign of vice and pain is o’er,
Warfare and strife can rage no more,
 Nor sin our virtue move.”

MEDITATION XIX.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens.”

WHEN any trial or infirmity becomes a trouble and provocation to us, we should beware of being betrayed into impatience or sinful resistance ; for it may possibly be wiser and better for us, that they should not be amended. They may be intended for our spiritual improvement, and for the trial of our temper and humility ; and our duty is to pray that they may be no hindrance in our Christian course, and to implore the divine aid to direct us. Let us not comment on the deeds of our neighbor, but properly consider our own ; let us forget the faults of others and remember our own. Let us love our neighbor as ourselves, in compassion veiling his frailties, and forgiving all cause of anger and resentment toward him, for Christ’s sake.

God, who gave us the law, points out hourly calls for us to practise it, and furnishes us with constant occasions for bearing each other’s burdens.

No man is so happy as never to give offence ; no man without his load of trouble ; no man so sufficient as never to need assistance, or so wise as never to need advice. Let us, therefore, comfort, relieve, instruct, bear with, and love each other. Nothing that happens to us from without is a sure criterion of our having done well or ill. Adversity does not make virtue or vice, but draws them into action ; it does not change the man from what he was, but only discovers what he really is.

MEDITATION XX.

“ Confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims.”

HE, who retires from the world to improve himself in the knowledge and love of God, must learn how to subdue and deny himself. How few understand, and how much fewer practise, this important feature of the Christian life. The cultivation and gratification of the senses; the honor and esteem of men are the trifles which engross too much of our attention till death opens to us an eternity.

Christ had no will but that of his heavenly Father,—no desire but the salvation of mankind. His life was all goodness and self-denial; and while the foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.

If then we would aspire to a perfect union with God, we must feel that we are only strangers and pilgrims on the earth. We must renounce for God and for heaven the esteem and the enjoyments of the world.

Such a state of feeling is not an exchange from labor to ease. Such a subjection of our desires and passions is as great a trial as the fire is to gold.

In humility then, let us be willing to become least of all and servants of all, and turn our hearts to the praises and love of Him who made us, and we shall lead an angelic life on earth, and have the fruition of the Lord our God.

Let us then so learn Christ and duty as these pilgrims on earth ; for they were intimately acquainted with its Maker and Lord ; and however despised on earth, they were particularly dear and precious in the sight of God.

MEDITATION XXI.

“ Be ye followers of Christ.”

THE life of the Christian should abound in good works,—in doing good and in being ready and willing to communicate. It should be what it seems to be,—yea and much more in his inward disposition of soul, because he serves a God of infinite purity, who sees the inmost soul. We, as the holy angels, are ever in his presence. We are never alone, and through eternity shall never be alone. How cheering to know and feel that there is a Being so near us, surrounding us, inhabiting us; and what can sustain this solemn truth for us, but to have joy in conversing with his brightness?

Let us, therefore, continually pray, that we may live well, that we may be quickened in zeal, and let us not faint and be weary, ascribing all our perseverance to the favor and assistance of God; as good men ever depend on Him for guidance in all their ways,—for even the preparation of the heart is from the Lord.

In all our bodily exercises, as well as our religious observances, let the improvement of our souls and the glory of God be the standard and regulation of our consciences.

To the soul of a true believer and devout follower of Christ, death is so far from being a terror, that it is a scene of glorious triumph. Having lived as a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, it costs but little to shake loose its bars and fetters, in view of the recompense and reward. Is it not to shine with the saints in glory? To join the innumerable company and general assembly and church of the first born in songs of praise? To be transformed to the likeness of the Saviour, and to see Him as He is,—in divine joy, love and peace?

How precious a contemplation is this! that in the vast and numberless regions of light, and bliss, and glory, the blessed inhabitants are all drawing from the same fountain; solace themselves in the fulness of joy, from rivers of pleasure which flow from the divine presence forevermore.

MEDITATION XXII.

“ Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”

CHRIST then is the truth, and all who desire to imitate Him must hear his voice and follow his steps. Why weary ourselves after abstract speculations and vain definitions? He, whom the divine word instructs, takes a much shorter road to truth, for the Gospel gives all saving knowledge, and he, who governs himself by its divine precepts, will establish his mind in perfect peace, and rest himself securely upon God. O thou whose essence is truth, unite us to thyself in perfect love!

All other studies and desires weary and distract the soul; to know thee alone is the object of our fervent longings. Should all the wisdom of the world be annihilated, still we may dispense with all, if thou vouchsafe to teach us thyself.

The more a man communes with his own soul, and retires into its recesses, and studies its ceaseless cravings after exaltations and

felicity, the less he will wander abroad and dwell on things without him. He will feel alarmed at his own powers, even at his *immortality*, unless the spirit within him is brought into union with the fountain from whence it emanated, and rests solely upon God, who breathed it into man.

This sublime perception rectifies the warring principles within ; it is a ray darted from heaven into the soul. The honor of God is his aim, and he orders his steps by this sole rule and to this end, suffering no vicious inclination to divert him, but making every undertaking to submit to the dictates of reason and religion. When those precious gifts of God to man, his intellectual faculties, are employed in extending the sphere of profitable wisdom, with the hope of rendering piety itself more illustrious, what can be more pleasing in the sight of God ?

MEDITATION XXIII.

“I am the light of the world.”

THE meaning of these words doubtless is, that the way to be truly enlightened, and to be delivered from blindness of heart, is to make the life of Christ our guide, and to form our wills and actions upon the perfect model of his bright example. The first step, therefore, in following Christ is the employing of our thoughts every morning upon the perfections of this bright original, ere we admit into the heart the intrusive cares of worldly objects.

The Gospel is the instructions of divine wisdom and mercy, breathed from lips of everlasting love ; and every man, endued with a Christian spirit, will not fail to find there hidden manna, fitted both to nourish and to delight the soul. What a treasure does the true Christian find, and what an inward satisfaction and delight in its excellency, as the spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to the soul.

The heart prepared by the love of God shed abroad in it, and flowing on the soul which follows Christ, produces the fruit, even a holy life, and from hence arises the benefit of meditation and prayer. “Love God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” Turn the whole force of desire upon the right object,— upon the God that formed you; whose boundless power encircles you; and as you are hastening toward eternal mansions, think constantly that God so loved you as to give his own Son for you; and that Christ says, “Come unto me.” Follow not then the paths of sin, and lose the favor of God.

MEDITATION XXIV.

“Believe not every spirit.”

BUT consider calmly and make a conscience of giving your credit with due caution. Be not more prone to speak and believe ill than well of your neighbor. This is our infirmity and unhappiness. He that guides his steps by the true lamp, — the word of God, — will consider our proneness to this sin, will suspend his opinion, neither believing all that he hears, nor officiously reporting all that he believes.

It is a proof of true wisdom, to do nothing rashly, nor to be obstinate and unyielding in our opinions, and to be cautious in spreading reports, is a necessary branch of Christian perfection. Advise in your affairs with wise men, and think it better to be instructed than to be self-willed, — for a small understanding, with the fear of God, is better than much wisdom, with transgression.

A virtuous life is crowned with God’s favor, and shines in wise conduct. The more

humble and observant we are to his directions, by a constant application of our will and understanding to his glory, the greater satisfaction and peace of mind we shall find resulting from all we do.

He, who inquires into the affairs of his neighbor, seldom or never descends into his own breast, that he may examine and understand himself. We find it hard to part with our vices, — our old friends, — and to unlearn habits; but we must resist and conquer, lest we become assaulted day by day with greater difficulties. Think of God and his love, which He has manifested toward us; and be resolute, and impatient to grow every day in his favor, and advance daily toward the fountain of everlasting love. The axe must be laid at the root of the tree, and the love of the world overcome, before we can attain unto holiness, or taste its fruits, — everlasting peace.

MEDITATION XXV.

“Let no one say, I am tempted of God.”

WE can never, in this world, be exempt from tribulation and trials,—nor should it seem strange when we carry the enemy within us; for with our innocence we lost our happiness and safety, and must be born to trouble, for it is the very ground of our nature,—the growth of sin,—for temptation and miseries to press hard on the heels of each other; these are inseparable from each other.

The true Christian, however, will derive great profit from these onsets; it humbles him, purifies the heart, and makes him wiser and better by suffering. This is a rough way to happiness, which all the saints of God have travelled before us, and by it they were at last safely conducted to their journey's end.

Neither is it safe to consider our temptations as overcome, by declining or flying from them. The way to overcome is by pa-

tient continuance and long suffering, and fervent prayer for God's assistance. When you see another tempted, deal with him gently, support him with compassion, and administer comfort and spiritual consolation.

Let us not despair on account of the sharpness of our own temptations, for to some life is a continual conflict, others have few and gentle trials. All must be right, for they are from God, who knows us intimately, and will render them all subservient to the happiness of his chosen servants. Take refuge in God. Esteem no trials trivial and small, for many saints stumble at small things, who come off victorious in great troubles.

Let all temptations lead us to pray more fervently, and the greater the conflict the greater the crown; for God will never forsake his own, nor let us be tempted beyond what we are able to bear.

MEDITATION XXVI.

“Thy kingdom come.”

THESE few words express or imply all that boundless benevolence can desire; and were it possible to personify benevolence, these are the words which she should be represented as uttering.

The kingdom, for the advancement of which we are here taught to pray, is that spiritual kingdom which Christ came to establish. It is styled the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, in allusion to a prediction of the prophet Daniel. In the days of these kings, says he, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these, and it shall stand forever.

The nature and design of this kingdom, as well as its future extent, are largely and particularly described by the inspired writers. Our Saviour has informed us that it is not

an external kingdom. The kingdom of God, says he, cometh not with observation ; neither shall they say, lo here ! or lo there ! for behold the kingdom of God is within you. He has also assured us, that his kingdom is not of this world ; and we also learn from one of his apostles, that it consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

It is, therefore, a spiritual kingdom ; its throne is erected in the souls of men ; its laws are the benevolent precepts and doctrines of the Gospel ; and its subjects those on whose hearts these laws are indelibly inscribed by the finger of God. When, therefore, we pray that this kingdom may come, we pray for the universal prevalence of Christianity, and for the removal or renovation of everything which tends to retard or limit its progress. We pray that the Gospel of Christ may be known and believed, its precepts understood and obeyed throughout the world ; that his religion may soon become the only religion of man ; and that its effects, righteousness, peace, and joy, may universally prevail.

MEDITATION XXVII.

“ We will serve the Lord.”

IT is the value of virtuous and religious principles, in enabling us to derive the full enjoyment and advantage from those relations and affections, by which a wise Providence has connected us together. Dearly as friends and kindred may already love one another, and valuable as may appear to them their present interchange of kind offices, it is only by remembering their common interests and duties as citizens of a heavenly country. It is only by making virtue and religion the common bonds of union, that they will secure its stability and perfect its joy. “ The house of the righteous shall stand.” It is our religion which infuses the vigor of immortality into our affections. It is religion which secures a peaceful home on earth, and while it prepares us for heaven, gives us, in the temper and comfort of our mutual intercourse, a foretaste of heavenly enjoyments.

Let all those who would have their friends, their relations, their children, love them with that affection which will not pass away, make their house the house of the righteous. Let them in their company, in their conversation, in their conduct, behold, admire, and enjoy the presence and the influence of virtue and religion.

Are we, then, truly anxious for the best interests of our household? for the true honor and lasting welfare of our families? Let us see to it that our instructions and counsels to them are such as will naturally proceed from their anxiety; that we ourselves be clearly seen to value and love those principles which we would have them cherish; show ourselves really walking in the way which we pronounce best, and desirous by every means of persuasion and affectionate allurement, to gather all whom we love into a company of fellow travellers to heaven.

Together let us seek that balm which flows for every wound of the dejected heart. Together let us implore from the Giver of all good the spirit of heavenly wisdom, the spirit of virtuous fortitude and religious

strength, — talk of those things which belong to peace, and whereby we may edify each other, that together we may direct our thoughts to a world where sorrow shall be known no more.

“ Pass a few swiftly fleeting years,
And all, that now in bodies live,
Shall quit alike the vale of tears,
Their righteous sentence to receive.

But all, before they hence remove,
May mansions for themselves prepare
In that eternal home of joy ;
And, O our God ! shall we be there ? ”

MEDITATION XXVIII.

“I have given you an example.”

By washing the feet of his disciples, our Lord doubtless intended to teach them the virtue of humility. The last supper was over. Jesus had just disclosed the melancholy intelligence, that he was about to be betrayed by one of his own followers.

The whole scene was indeed solemn and impressive, and as might be supposed, calculated to check all feelings of pride and ambition. But we are informed that the fact proved otherwise. For there was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted greatest.

It was to condemn this worldly temper, that our Saviour gave them in his own person a striking lesson of humility,—stooping to the lowest office of menial duty.

What beauty and impressiveness there is in this scene of our Saviour’s history. To behold a being so highly favored of God, so preëminently endowed with wisdom, and

holiness, and power, whose public life had been one continued series of benificent miracles and eloquent discourses,—whose benignant countenance bespoke his Godlike character, bending to the lowliest act of social kindness, even to the feet of those whom he had reclaimed, instructed, and saved, while the simple men, whose pride he had thus gently corrected, felt troubled by his courtesy, and would fain have resisted such unheard-of condescension.

What a sublime lesson is here given to the meanness and littleness of this world's pride and haughtiness. How does it wither into nothingness all that pomp and show by which the opulent of the earth affect the semblance of greatness, and would gladly exclude from their presence and communion those humbler children of humanity, whose feet the Redeemer of the world thought it not beneath him to wash !

Our Saviour's humility is remarkable, both for its simplicity and its dignity ; and when we compare it with the other graces of his character,—his piety, his self-command, his purity, gentleness, and philanthropy, we be-

hold such a beautiful and harmonious assemblage of virtues, that we feel persuaded there must have been something more than human in the influence which it inspired and cherished then, and exclaim, almost involuntarily, with the centurion at the cross, "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

"Ye great ones of the earth ! oh, not in vain
To you may this divine example speak ;
For thence he taught that those should serve mankind,
Who, in his kingdom, for distinction seek."

MEDITATION XXIX.

“And he went into a solitary place and there prayed.”

A STRIKING instance of our Saviour’s love to his Father, was his delight in conversing with him by prayer. He frequently retired from the world, and with the greatest devotion and pleasure, spent whole nights in that heavenly exercise, although he had no sins to confess, and but few secular interests to pray for, which are almost the only things that are wont to drive us to our devotions. Nay, we may say his whole life was a kind of prayer, a constant course of communion with God; if the sacrifice was not always offering, yet was the fire still kept alive; nor was the blessed Saviour ever overtaken with that dulness and torpor of spirit, of which so many complain in the exercise of devotion.

The sincere and devout affection of the Saviour expressed itself in an entire resignation to his Father’s will. It was his very meat and drink to finish the work of him that sent him. Such was his infinite content.

and satisfaction in the performance of this labor, that when, being faint and weary with his long journey, he rested himself on Jacob's well, and entreated water of the Samaritan woman, the success of his conversation with her filled his mind with such delight as seemed to have redounded to his very body, refreshing his spirits, and making him forget the thirst whereof he complained before, and refuse the meat which he had sent his disciples to buy. Nor was he less patient and submissive in suffering the will of God, than diligent in doing it.

In his last conflict he prayed to God, that *if it were possible, that cup might be removed*; yet he gently adds, *nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done*. Mark his resignation, when he acknowledged the anguish of his spirit. *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? — Father save me from this hour*; and no sooner had he uttered these words, but as on second thought he recalled them. *But for this cause came I into the world*; and concludes, *Father, glorify thy name*.

Blessed Saviour, teach us a like resignation to do our Father's will.

MEDITATION XXX.

“Thou compassest my path.”

THE order and beauty of creation is like a veil that hides our Creator from our weak vision. The light that should enlighten, blinds us. Too high and too pure to be perceived by their gross senses, the earthly minded cannot comprehend thee, O God. Frightful darkness that envelopes the children of men ! when they can see only shadows, and even truth appears only a phantom ! when what is nothing seems all to them, and what is everything is as nothing to them. What do I see in all nature ? God ! God in everything, and God alone ! Who does not see thee, has seen nothing. He is as if he were not, his whole life is a dream.

Sorrow to the soul that has not seen thee ; that is far from God, without hope, without consolation ! But blessed already are they who seek thee, who thirst for thee ! Un-speakable the felicity of those who rejoice

in thy immediate presence, from whose eyes thou hast wiped away every tear, and whose hearts are filled with thy love and presence.

“ there cannot be
On earth a joy so pure and high,
As when the soul to God would flee,
And communes with eternity ;
Draws from the living springs its bliss,
And turns to heaven for happiness.”

MEDITATION XXXI.

“Behold, ye count them worthy which endure.”

ARE we willing to suffer for God? Does our desire to be with him destroy our fear of death? Do we love to think of God? Do we give ourselves up to him? It is by asking ourselves these questions, that we shall ascertain the true state of our souls.

Are we willing to suffer for God? I do not mean of a willingness that consists only of talking eloquently of the uses of trials, and that shrinks from the slightest personal inconveniences, and indulges in all the seductive pleasures of a sensual life. There is a certain fanciful spirituality, that is ever meditating upon resignation, patience, and the joy of tribulation, while the whole life discovers a jealous self-love, unwilling to suffer anything. True piety is not satisfied in offering to you a sterile faith; it would add the sacrifice of an humble heart, glad to suffer for him.

In vain will you attempt to follow Jesus,

if you do not bear his cross. Dare you, can you complain, when you have his example to support you? Will not the faithful soul rejoice to suffer in imitation of Jesus, and to show his love for him, with the hope of meriting the blessing promised to those who weep? If I were seriously persuaded that the life of a Christian is a life of patience and self-denial, if in sincerity and truth I loved Jesus Christ, who suffered and humbled himself for me, should I be contented in talking of trials, when I am called upon to bear them, with giving lessons to my neighbor and not applying them to myself? Should I be so impatient with the infirmities of others, so discouraged by obstacles, so disquieted by little troubles, so sensitive about human friendship, so jealous and intractable toward those whom I ought to conciliate, so severe toward the faults of others, so lenient and so backward in mending my own? Should I be so ready to murmur at the trials by which God would prove my virtue?

MEDITATION XXXII.

“ For if ye suffer with him, ye shall also rise with him.”

ARE we willing to die to be with Christ? “ Holiness of life and willingness to die are inseparable dispositions.” It hath been said, the love of this life and another cause an incessant conflict in the imperfect soul. Let not such persons say they wish to live in order to repair the past; if they examine their hearts, they will find they cling to life because they are not sufficiently virtuous to desire the purity of heaven. If we only feared the judgments of God upon our entrance into eternity, this fear would be calm and holy.

The perfection of our love to God consists in our entire confidence in him. If we loved him as our Father, should we fear him as our judge? Should we fly from his presence, should we tremble thus when sickness warns us of the approach to death?

But there is a secret infidelity at the

bottom of our hearts that stifles these sentiments. We weep at the death of those we love, and we tremble at our own, as they who have no hope. Judging from our anxiety about this life, who would believe that we anticipated a happy futurity? How can they to whom religion has opened the path to another life,— they whose hope is full of immortality,— how can they reconcile such substantial and glorious hopes with the vain enjoyments which fill our hearts in this world? Our piety is sadly imperfect if we cannot conquer the fear of death.

MEDITATION XXXIII.

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.”

How enviable is the portion and experience of Christians. The world, indeed, knoweth them not. They can only see their outward condition ; and because this is often poor and afflicted, they are ready to judge of them as poor and miserable. But how differently would they think, could they see their inward joy and composure ! If they could see how they rise above those changes which ruffle and terrify others ; if they could see how, while the men of the earth are disquieted and devoured by the sorrows of earth, they have, even in this vale of tears, an asylum where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest, and the fear of God, which passes all understanding, keeps their hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus.

But alas ! have we not drawn a picture of what Christians *ought to be*, rather than what they are ? It is lamentable, that they

do not more fully live up to their privileges and improve their resources. Hence that care which they are commanded to resign, and which their heavenly Father is more than willing to take upon himself, they retain and even cherish, to the destruction of their comfort ; and instead of their dwelling at ease, and being in quiet from the fear of evil, they are ingenious at self-vexation, and suffer in imagination more than reality !

Lord humble us, and forgive, and teach us to profit, and lead us in the way we should choose.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

“ Consider the lilies.”

“ CONSIDER the lilies ;” they are objects of providential care. This was the peculiar aim of our Saviour in the admonition. He would free the minds of his disciples from all undue solicitude respecting their temporal subsistence. Therefore, says he, “ take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ? ” He then refers, in his own inimitable manner, to each of the necessaries of life, food and clothing. “ Behold the fowls of the air ; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? ” How simple and convincing the inference ! God does not love the birds and flowers as he loves us. He has not put his spirit *within them*. They are not to endure forever. Will he take

care of the less and overlook the infinitely greater?

Be not then disheartened, O anxious Christian. Let not the perplexities of thy daily walk lead thee for a moment to distrust that beneficent care which watcheth over thy minutest concerns. Let thy care only be to act thy part with reference to his approbation; and He who clothes the grass, and gives beauty and fragrance to the lily of the field, will never be unmindful of thee.

“ The smallest bird that skims the wind,
Finds through that pathless air a way;
And shall not we, his nobler care,
Whose hearts he fills with hope and joy,
With faith to trust, and strength to bear,
In grateful praise our lips employ? ”

MEDITATION XXXV.

“Ye are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

CHRISTIANS ! what gratitude becomes you ! From darkness light has arisen ! Ye are now blessed with all spiritual comforts ! How should such obligations be discharged ? By a few languid emotions ? a few formal acknowledgments ? A soul at peace with its conscience and its God, demands a life of praise.

Christians ! what confidence becomes you ! Ye *were* as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls ! You are returned unto one who always loved you ; to one whose power is almighty, whose heart is made of tenderness, who never leaves you nor slumbers nor sleeps. You are returned to one, who, lest any hurt you, never overlooks you ; who has said, my sheep shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands. You can lie down in green pastures, or walk

beside still waters, assured that if found in the way of righteousness you are safe. Not only so, you shall be led to living fountains of waters, and God himself has said, he will wipe away all tears from your eyes.

Are not these precious promises? *Trust* in them, and thou shalt be made a *partaker* of them.

O not in vain were spoke,
Saviour, thy words of mercy ; still decreed
To cheer my drooping soul, upon its way
Through earthly scenes of trial, care, and strife.
Yes, I will come to thee ; thy words of life
Shall calm each anxious thought, and chase away
The hopes, the fears, the vain desires that rise,
To lure my spirit from its kindred skies.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

“ Fear not, for I am with thee.”

Do perplexities excite your fears? Fear thou not, for he is with thee to guide thee. The Jews had before them a pathless desert; but to relieve them from their anxieties, the Lord furnished them with a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night. As this paused they rested, as this moved they went straight on, or turned to the right hand or left, according to the direction of their leader, till it brought them to a city of habitation.

You have the same advantage. You have the world before you, through which you must pass to reach a better, even a heavenly country. How much depends upon your course, yea, and upon every movement. And the way of man in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Neither is it necessary, if he knoweth the way you take, he will direct you with his eye. He is with you for this very purpose. “ I will

bring the blind, by a way they knew not; I will lead them in paths they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight."

Do your duties excite your fears? Fear thou not, for he is with thee to aid thee. You are indeed called to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; to forgive injuries; to walk by faith; to have your conversation in heaven. You will not resist those demands; you will acknowledge them to be just and good; but you will lament your conformity to them; and sometimes they discourage you. They must indeed always dismay you, if you view them only in connexion with your own strength. But your sufficiency is of God. His almighty spirit will help your infirmities. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. His strength is made perfect in weakness.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

“I, even I, am he that comforteth you.”

Do dangers excite your fears? Fear thou not, for He is with thee to keep thee. Though surrounded by temptations and outward foes, and but a worm in yourself, yet if God be for you, who can be against you?

Do trials excite your fears? Fear not, for He is with thee to comfort thee. And his consolation is not only tender but strong consolation, sufficient to bear up the mind under any burden, and to cheer the heart in every distress. “Yea,” says one who has often been revived in the midst of trouble, “yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” Death is a trying hour; but it should not appal you. You are not to judge by your present feelings, what your experience will be when the season arrives. Our heavenly Father is peculiarly with his people in their afflictions, and his grace is

proportional to their need. He will not, he cannot fail you in your hour of extremity; and in the language of another you may say, "I can smile on death, if God smiles on me." Here is enough in every condition, in every circumstance, to embolden and animate us, if we can but lay hold of it. But what is all this, without faith? Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

“ They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.”

IF our journey through this world prove discouraging, our intercourse with our Father above relieves the tediousness of the road, prevents weariness, revives our drooping spirits, and renews our strength. With Him we can dispense with things, the loss of which would otherwise destroy all our peace and comfort. When the fig-tree does not blossom, and there is no fruit in the vine, we can rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation. In all our personal and relative trials, his presence opens a retreat, we enter where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

There is profit in walking with God. Where is the believer who cannot acknowledge, “ it is good for me to draw nigh to God.” The mind is powerfully affected by the objects with which we are very familiar. He who is much engaged in ignoble pur-

suits will soon be debased ; but we are elevated in the presence and contemplation of greatness and sublimity. The things of earth tend to sensualize us ; but when we are with God, the inroads of the world are checked ; we stand on holy ground ; impure desires and vain thoughts fall off. The nearer we are to God, the more will all our religious principles be influenced, the more we shall grow in grace, the more will our conversation be in heaven.

Let us not, then, sacrifice our highest welfare in disregarding the attainment. We *must* be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. What would many find in heaven, were they admitted there, but a melancholy and miserable state? Could *they* enjoy the perpetual presence of God, who cannot endure even the occasional thoughts of him ? Before we can be brought to heaven we must be made heavenly. By walking here in faith we shall prepare ourselves to enter there in glory, according to the promise, “They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.”

MEDITATION XXXIX.

“ For no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth unto himself.”

LET us each ask ourselves, are we ready to die? Let us not deceive ourselves by a false courage. Does the ardor of my love for God overcome my fear of death? Do I use this world as not abusing it? Do I regard it as a passing shadow? Am I unwilling to be subjected to its vanities? Is there nothing here that flatters my self-love, that enslaves my affections, making me almost forget eternity? In fine, am I every day preparing for death? Is it by this thought I regulate my life? And when the last hour shall arrive, shall I be prepared for the fatal stroke? Shall I not shrink from its approach? What will become of my courage, when I shall feel myself between this world that is fast vanishing from my sight, and eternity that is opening to receive me? Whence is it that those, who profess not to be lovers of life, do not fear death less than others?

Why is it, we are ever ready to confide
in earthly friends, and so afraid to trust
our all with God? This trust alone will
make us immovable as Mount Zion. Let
us strive to make it more firm and elevated.
“I can do all things through Christ who
strengtheneth me.”

“And Death! there are who look to thee
But as the minister of grace,
And who thy dark approach can see
With smiles, for they have won the race.”

MEDITATION XL.

“ Let us meditate upon thy works, O Lord. ”

Do we enjoy the contemplation of God? Do we feel a sincere joy when we pray to him, and when we meditate upon his presence? He who loves much prays much. He whose heart is closely united to God has no sweeter consolation than in communion with him. He finds a positive happiness in being able to love him, to speak to him, to meditate upon his attributes, to adore his majesty, to admire his power, to dwell upon his goodness, and to yield himself up to his providence. In this intercourse he pours out, as into the bosom of a tender father, all the sorrows of his overflowing heart; this is his resource under every affliction; he finds strength and consolation in spreading out all his weaknesses and desires; and as our whole lives are full of imperfections, as we are never free from sin, we should always, in the exercise of prayer, ask pardon of God for our ingratitude, and thank him for his mercy.

Let man, then, admire what he understands, and let him be silent when he cannot comprehend.

“ A holy thing is life in him, whose mind
Dwelleth with God, amid his works profound,
As if within his sacred presence shrined,
‘Unspotted by the world,’ yet ever found
With the concerns of earth, that press around,
Mingling for good. All nature is to him
Instinct with God ; he deems its every sound
An echo of the everlasting hymn,
Its light a gleam of that which never shall be dim.”

MEDITATION XLI.

“Pray without ceasing.”

Do not think it is necessary to pronounce many words. To pray is to say, let thy will be done ; it is to form a good purpose ; it is to raise your *heart* to God ; it is to lament your weakness ; it is to sigh over your frequent disobedience.

This prayer demands neither method, nor science, nor reasoning ; it is not necessary to quit one’s employment ; it is a simple movement of the heart towards its Creator, and a desire that whatever you are doing, you may do it to his glory.

The best of all prayers is to act with a pure intention, and with a continual reference to the will of God. It depends upon ourselves whether our prayers be efficacious. It is not by a miracle, but by a change in the affections, that we are benefited, by a spirit of submission. Let us believe, let us trust, let us hope, and God will never reject our prayer.

Let us pray that we may learn what we are, and what we ought to be. By this means, we shall not only learn the number and bad effects of our peculiar faults, but we shall also learn to what virtues we are called, and the way to practise them. The rays of that pure and heavenly light that visits the humble soul, will beam on us ; and we shall feel and understand that every thing is possible to those who put their trust in God.

We see Jesus Christ inviting his disciples to go apart, in a desert place, and rest awhile, after their return from cities, where they had been to announce his religion. How much more necessary is it for us, to approach the source of all virtue, that we may revive our failing faith and charity, when we return from the busy scenes of life, where men speak and act as if they had never known a God. We should look upon prayer as the remedy of our weaknesses, the rectifier of our faults. He who was without sin prayed constantly ; how much more ought we, who are sinners, to be faithful in prayer !

MEDITATION XLII.

“ The spirit of God dwelleth within us.”

THIS is what the Christian religion teaches us. You will ask, are we then inspired ? Yes, doubtless ; but not as the prophets and apostles were. Without the actual inspiration of the Almighty, we could neither do, nor will, nor think anything. We are then always inspired ; but we are ever stifling this inspiration.

God never ceases to speak to us ; but the noise of the world without, and the tumult of our passions within, bewilder us, and prevent us from listening to him. All must be silent around us, and all must be still within us, when we should listen with our whole souls to this voice. It is a still small voice, and is only heard by those who listen to no other ! Alas ! how seldom is it that the soul is so still it can hear only when God speaks to it. Our vain desires and our self-love confuse the voice within us. We know that it speaks to us, that it demands something

of us ; but we cannot hear what it says, and we are often glad it is unintelligible. Ought we to wonder, that so many, even religious persons, who are engrossed with amusements, full of vain desires, false wisdom, and self-confidence, cannot understand it, and regard this interior word of God as a chimera ?

This inspiration must not make us think that we are like prophets. The inspiration of the prophets was full of certainty upon those things which God commanded them to declare, or to do ; they were called upon to reveal what related to the future, or to perform a miracle, or to act with the divine authority. This inspiration, on the contrary, is, without light and without certainty ; it limits itself to teaching us obedience, patience, meekness, humility, and all other Christian virtues. It is a simple invitation from the depths of the soul, to obey, and to resign ourselves even to death, if it be the will of God.

If this truth be admitted, that God always speaks within us, to impenitent sinners, but they are deafened and stunned by the tu-

mult of their passions, and cannot hear his voice, his word is to them as a fable. But when we are truly touched, we find no difficulty in comprehending this secret voice ; for it is that which penetrates our souls,— the two-edged sword of which St. Paul speaks.

God's presence is ever with the contrite. He is pleased to dwell with such and to communicate himself to them. My Father and I, says Jesus Christ, will come unto him and make our abode with him.

MEDITATION XLIII.

“ Who is he, that has resisted the Almighty and been at peace with him.”

NEVER let us be discouraged with ourselves ; it is not when we are conscious of our faults that we are the most wicked ; on the contrary, we are less so. We see by a brighter light ; and let us remember, for our consolation, that we never perceive our sins till we begin to cure them. We must neither flatter, nor be impatient with ourselves, in the correction of our faults.

Despondency is not a state of humility ; on the contrary, it is the vexation and despair of a cowardly pride, — nothing is worse ; whether we stumble, or whether we fall, we must think only of rising again, and going on in our course. Our faults may be useful to us, if they cure us of a vain confidence in ourselves, and do not deprive us of an humble and salutary confidence in God.

Let us bless God with as true thankfulness, if we have been enabled to make any

progress in virtue, as if we had made it in our own strength, and let us not be troubled with the weak agitations of self-love ; let them pass ; do not think of them. God never makes us feel our weaknesses, but that we may seek strength from him. What is involuntary should not trouble us ; but the great thing is, never to act against the light within us, but to desire to follow where God would lead us.

MEDITATION XLIV.

“ Rebuke with all gentleness.”

THEY who correct others ought to watch the moment when God touches their hearts ; we must bear a fault with patience, till we perceive his spirit reproaching them within. We must imitate him who gently reproves, so that they feel it is less God than their own hearts, that condemns them. When we blame with impatience, because we are displeased with the fault, it is a human censure and not the disapprobation of God. It is a sensitive self-love, that cannot forgive the self-love of others. The more self-love we have, the more severe are our censures.

There is nothing so vexatious as the collision between one excessive self-love, and another still more violent and sensitive. The passions of others are infinitely ridiculous to those who are under the dominion of their own.

The ways of God are very different. He

is ever full of kindness for us, he gives us strength, he regards us with pity and condescension, he remembers our weakness, he waits for us. The less we love ourselves, the more considerate we are for others. We wait even years, to give salutary advice. We wait for Providence to give the occasion, and grace to open their hearts to receive it. If you would gather the fruit before the time, you lose it entirely.

MEDITATION XLV.

“ Oh thou, of little faith, why didst thou doubt? ”

IT pleases God sometimes to exercise the faith of his people, that he may strengthen their dependence on him, and demonstrate at once his compassion and his power. Thus are storms permitted, oftentimes, to rise around them, and for a while, they are left in darkness, and tossed with tempests ; but he is near at hand, when they think him at the remotest distance ; and when he seems to be passing by them, as regardless of their danger and distress, he has designs of mercy towards them, and acts in such a manner, on purpose to quicken them in their applications to him.

Happy would the Christian be, could he always see and discern his Lord aright ! But alas ! how often does he appear to the disordered mind, as the object of terror rather than confidence ; and in a day of darkness, while he may seem to treat his suffering people with neglect, instead of

seeking him with a more earnest importunity, how are they ready to be overwhelmed with fears, and to conclude he has forgotten them !

At the command of Jesus, Peter ventured to go to him on the sea ! And through what storms and dangers may we not pass, if we are sure that our Lord calls us ! Yet the rebuke which he suffered, may warn us not to throw ourselves on unnecessary trials, lest our excess of confidence end in fear and disgrace.

In how many circumstances of life, does the Christian appear, to his own imagination, like Peter, beginning to sink in the waves ! But in the time of our distress, like him, let us cry to Jesus for help ; and while we are lifting up the hands of faith and prayer, we may humbly hope to be rescued. Let every experience of life teach us our dependence on him, and enforce our willing obedience. May divine grace deliver us from hardness of heart and stupidity of mind, which sometimes remains unconvinced in the midst of evidence, and unaffected, when all our experience may only show us his merciful designs towards us.

MEDITATION XLVI.

“ On their journey he entered a village called Bethany ; and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house.”

No sooner is our Saviour entered into this house, but he sets himself to preach the word of salvation ! In the parlor, as in the temple, he is ever about his Father’s work.

Oh, Mary ! How enviable is thy situation ! Who would not rather have sat with thee, at the feet of Jesus, to hear his wisdom, than have filled the throne of the greatest earthly prince ! Blessed were thine eyes in what they saw, thine ears in what they heard, and thine heart in what it received and treasured as food, which would endure to everlasting life.

How unhappily was her good sister deprived of these golden moments, while hurried about meats and drinks, and tables with their furniture, till she lost not only her opportunity, but her temper too ; as it is indeed hard to preserve it, without a resolute

guard, amidst the crowd and clamor of domestic cares !

Happy is she who can manage her concerns with the meekness and composure of wisdom, and adjust her affairs in such a manner, that they may not exclude the pleasures of devotion, and deprive her of the means of religious improvement !

Happy the man who, in a pressing variety of secular business, is not so cumbered and careful as to forget that *one thing* which is absolutely needful ; but resolutely chooses this better part, and retains it as his only secure and everlasting treasure ! Oh, that this comprehensive, important sentence were ever before our eyes. Oh, that it were inscribed deep upon our hearts ! *One thing is needful.* And what is this one thing, but the care of the soul ? What but an humble attention to the voice and the gospel of Christ ? Yet as if this were of all things the most unnecessary, for what poor trifling care is it not forgotten ? Yea, to what worthless vanity is it not daily sacrificed ?

MEDITATION XLVII.

“ Though clouds and darkness are round about thee, yet justice and mercy are the habitation of thy throne.”

IN another life, we shall see and understand the wonders of God’s goodness, that have escaped us in this, and we shall rejoice at what made us weep on earth. Alas! in our present darkness, we cannot see either our true good or evil. If God were to gratify our desires, it would be our ruin. He saves us by breaking the ties that bind us to earth. We complain, because God loves us better than we know how to love ourselves. We weep, because he has taken away those we love from temptation and sin. We would possess all that flatters and delights our self-love, though it might lead us to forget, that we are exiles in a strange land. God takes away the poisonous cup from our hands, and we weep as a child weeps, when its mother takes away the shining weapon with which it would pierce its own breast.

Prayer alone can console the wounded spirit. Then we are with God in faith and in love. The most holy occupation, that does not bring us in this way in his presence, may be a study, but it is not prayer.

God is our only consoler. Remain in silence in his presence ; he will comfort. We shall find all we have lost in him. Happy they who desire no other consolation. This is pure and inexhaustible.

MEDITATION XLVIII.

“Be temperate in all things.”

REGULATE your expenses and your business. Be honorable and modest, simple and free. Serve all mankind according to the golden rule, and the King of kings, before whom all visible glories are but shadows.

Let your conduct be single, moderate, and without affectation of either good or evil; but be really firm in the cause of virtue, and so decided that no one can hope to lead you astray. When it is evident that you are devoted in good faith to the cause of religion, no one will make the attempt to turn you from your course.

Put your trust not in your resolutions, or your own strength, but in the goodness of God, who has loved you when you thought not of him, and before you could love him.

MEDITATION XLIX.

“ Be free, but use not your liberty for an occasion of evil.”

GREAT freedom and great exactness should be united. Those who have little experience of the ways of God, think they cannot unite these two virtues. They understand by being *exact*, living in constraint, in sorrow, in a timid and scrupulous disquietude, that destroys the repose of the soul; that finds sin in everything, and is so narrow-minded that it questions about the merest trifles, and dares hardly to breathe. They define being *free*, having an easy conscience, not regarding small things; being contented with avoiding great faults, and not considering any but gross crimes as faults; and with the exception of these, allowing whatever flatters self-love, and any license to the passions, that does not produce what they call great evil.

True Fidelity consists in obeying God in everything, and following the light that

points out our duty, and his spirit that prompts us to do it ; having the desire to please him, without debating about great or little sins, about imperfections or unfaithfulness.

To this sincere desire to do the will of God, we must add a cheerful spirit, that is not overcome when it has failed, but begins again and again to do better ; hoping always to the very end, to be able to do it ; bearing with its own weaknesses as God bears with us ; waiting with patience when we shall be delivered from our sins, making no useless reflections upon our faults, which would retard our progress.

The first sight of our little failures should humble us ; but then we must press on, not judging ourselves with too much rigor, not regarding God as a spy, watching for our least offence, or as an enemy who places snares in our path, but as a Father, who loves and wishes to save us ; trusting in his goodness, invoking his blessing, and doubting all other support ; this is true liberty, — it is Christian freedom, wherein alone can be found true peace.

MEDITATION L.

“ Perfect love casteth out fear.”

THE character of true worship is not to fear God as we fear a terrible and powerful man, who destroys all that resist him. God is infinitely just and almighty, and doubtless he is to be feared ; but only by those who refuse to love him, and make themselves acquainted with him. The best fear we can have of God, is lest we should not please him, and do his will.

The fear of punishment is useful to men, who have wandered from the right path ; it may restrain from crime, but it is only useful as it is the means of leading them to love him. There is not a man in the world, who desires to be feared rather than loved by his children. When we perform good actions from fear alone, we perform them merely to avoid suffering. There is not only no parent, but no master, who would love or reward those only bound to him by fear, without any real love.

With how much more reason is it then that God, who has given us intelligence and affections, in order that we may love and know him, cannot be satisfied with a servile fear, but desires our hearts, and that our love should return to the fountain whence it first flowed.

“ Blest Comforter divine !
Let rays of heavenly love
Amid our gloom and darkness shine,
And guide our souls above.

Draw with thy still small voice
Us from each sinful way ;
And bid the mourning saint rejoice,
Though earthly joys decay.

Oh, fill thou every heart
With love to all our race !
Great Comforter ! to us impart
These blessings of thy grace.”

MEDITATION LI.

“Ye must be born again.”

Most persons, when they wish to be converted, or to reform, think more of performing some difficult and extraordinary actions, than of purifying their intentions, and sacrificing their inclinations, in the most common duties of their situation in life; in which they are deceived. It would be better to make less change in the *action*, and a deeper one in the *disposition*, with which it is performed. When we are already pursuing an honorable calling, it is necessary to make a change *within*, rather than without, if we would become real Christians.

God is not satisfied with the motion of the lips, nor the posture of the body, nor outward ceremonies. It is our undivided love he demands; it is an acquiescence, without any reserve, in his will.

Let us carry this submissive temper, this will inspired by the will of God, wherever his providence leads us. Let us seek the

Father of our spirits in those times that seem so vacant, and they will be full of his presence. Let us never quit the cross that unites us to our Master. Let us live, and let us die with him who came to show us the true way to heaven. We must take up the cross, if we would follow him. We suffer in the narrow way, but we hope. We suffer, but we behold the heavens opening. We suffer, but we are willing to do so. We love God, and his love will be our recompence.

MEDITATION LII.

“ Fear not; for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

HAPPY society will not be confined to the present transient abodes of man. The communion of earth is but a dim picture of the fellowship of heaven. There will be the same gracious Providence as here, its mercy shining with brighter beams; and that we have now the social feeling impressed upon our nature by the Divine hand, is a pledge that it will then be gratified to the utmost extent of our hopes and wishes.

We shall not be left to sleep forever in the grave, nor be doomed on awaking to wander through interminable solitudes; but shall be taken to a Father’s house, to sit down in blissful society with all the brethren and sisters of the human family, the ransomed of the Lord, redeemed from death and destruction by an everlasting arm. In that joyful community will be fulfilled the prayer of Him, that in the name and power

of the merciful Father, they all may be made perfect in one glorious body, of which Almighty God will be the animating and intelligent, the preserving and purifying spirit!

The soul of man, though sighing after thee,
Hath never known thee, saving as it knows
The stars of heaven, whose glorious light we see ;
The sun, whose radiance dazzles as it glows ;
Something that is beyond us, and above
The reach of human power, but not of human love.

And yet thou hast not left thyself without
A revelation ; all we feel and see,
Within us and around, forbids to doubt,
Yet speaks so darkly and mysteriously
Of what we are, and shall be ever more,
We doubt, and yet believe, and tremble, and adore !

MEDITATION LIII.

“ Be content with such things as ye have.”

ARE we not justified in saying, study *contentment* rather than *prosperity*? Put not back any proffered good, but do not tempt changes. As far as it is allowed you to choose your state, select with deliberation, and then keep your place with constancy. On light considerations break not up your first connexions, which are generally the happiest and best; and never, but in the last necessity, abandon the domestic hearth, around which Providence has planted by an immutable decree, the choicest virtues and the purest pleasures.

You aspire, Christians! to heaven, and its gates are open to all that are qualified for admission; but they alone are fitted for that perfect society who here cultivate the social feeling. The inheritor of heaven is he, of whatever church, that has been amiable and useful upon earth. Good works, proceeding from benevolence, are your title to the

heavenly inheritance. The whole family of heaven and earth are said by the apostle to be named after Jesus Christ, and in the example of this lover of souls, let every disciple of his learn how to prepare himself for future happiness and glory. He pleased not himself, he made himself of no reputation. He wept with the mourners, and said to the sorrowful, "Be of good cheer." He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. And this glorious reward, under the universal all-merciful Father, is to place the crown of life upon the heads of all that seek for immortality by patient continuance in well doing.

There is a lesson of the gospel, short, but all-important, a text for every man's conscience, a maxim, which, well remembered, will fit us equally for earth and heaven. "Glory, honor and peace to every man that worketh good."

MEDITATION LIV.

“Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

THE brief and ephemeral existence of man is a sufficient reason against long-lived enmity. “Let not the sun go down on your wrath,” for you know not what another revolution of the sun may bring forth, with regard either to you or to the object of your dislike. The coming night may involve either or both of you in calamity and trouble. You may have no more a portion of anything done under the sun; or you may seek him in the morning and not find him; his place on earth may be vacant; let him then alone, and exhibit not the shocking inconsistency of a mortal creature cherishing a never-dying anger against a fellow-mortal.

Does not the history of your past life rebuke the folly of all fierce resentment? How many of those, against whom your unkind feelings were aroused, have been snatched from your presence by death? You resented the interposition of these shadows

between you and some object of your desire, but ere you could give full expression to your passion, the shadows were withdrawn, and you were left to meditate on the futility of your anger, and the vanity of so much vexation of spirit.

From the past, learn what the future will be ; in the story of other short-lived creatures, learn your own ; and moderate your self-love and self-importance, and lessen your estimate of the injuriousness of your neighbors, by reflecting how soon you and they will change your hostile position, how soon your head, your heart, your hand, will be quiet ; how soon your love and hatred will have perished, and even the memory of you, with all your agitations and contests, be forgotten !

MEDITATION LV.

“Commune with thine own heart.”

HAPPY are they, in whatever state or period of life, who are not afraid to converse with themselves; who seek not to escape from their consciences; who dare to shut the doors about them, to commune with their own hearts, in their own chambers, and be still; who shrink not from the inquiry, what they have done, and what they have neglected; whither they are going, and how far they are prepared for their journey; who have no secret wish to put off the examination of the affairs of their souls, lest they should find that all is not right; who do not go on in moral and spiritual uncertainty, dreading to feel their own pulse, lest they should discover disease of character; who can take shelter from the world’s envy and reproach in the integrity of their own hearts; who have the witness within themselves that, though their lives may not be perfect, their meaning is blameless; and who, in the acquittal and

the rejoicing testimony of their own consciences, look forward with humility, but at the same time with filial confidence, to their appearance before that Being, who will judge as a father, will pity them that fear Him, and will accept and reward those in whose heart it has been to honor and serve Him, and to do good to his creatures and children.

We are not called to the same trials and sufferings as our blessed Master, but we have need of the same supports ; for our imperfect characters are less equal to our common duties, than the perfect character of Jesus was to his great work as a suffering and dying Redeemer. The example, therefore, of the Author and Finisher of our faith, should encourage us to observe retired and secret, as well as open and public devotions ; to enter as he commands into our closets, to shut the door and pray to the Father in secret ; and his own experience testifies, that the happy influence which private devotion exercises over the mind, fitting it to pass through the world without defilement, to enjoy pleasure with innocence, to perform the allotted task of duty with sufficiency and

cheerfulness, and to meet trials with a firm reliance upon the Almighty Hand which *can* support, and will finally save the soul.

True peace is the possession of the favor of God. This is found only in submission, faith, and obedience to his laws ; it is the result of a pure and holy love for him. Resign every forbidden joy ; restrain every wish that does not refer to his will ; banish all eager desires, all anxiety.

What is it troubles you ? Poverty, neglect, external or internal troubles ? Look upon everything as in the hands of God, and as real blessings bestowed upon his children, of which you receive your full portion.

MEDITATION LVI.

“When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

WHAT is the destiny of mankind? What the ultimate condition of our species? What the revolutions of nations? What the vicissitudes of opinion? Our country, the cradle and the tomb of our fathers, ourselves and our children, what changes are inscribed under its name in the book of heaven’s decrees? The monuments of our power, our learning, and our charity, how long will they remain to bear witness to us? Our buildings, our houses of prayer, our burial places, will they withstand the tooth of all-devouring time? Shall we be remembered and our names be preserved amongst living men? Our children and theirs, what will be their condition, what their character, and what their moral influence upon ages that we see only in shadowy prospective? Will truth and righteousness flow down with the stream of generations? And “when the Son of

man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ? ”

Futurity is indeed of itself a dark object, but the promise of God is set in the cloud ; and the beautiful rays of mercy comfort our hearts and revive our hopes.

Where is our faith ? What are the proofs of it ? Do we believe this life is only a short passage to another ?

Do we *live* by our faith ? Does it animate us, and do we enjoy the eternal truths it presents ? Do we accustom ourselves to view everything with the eye of faith ? Alas ! instead of living by faith, we extinguish it in our souls. How can we truly believe as we profess, and yet act as we act ?

The kingdom of heaven must reign within us, — blessed are the eyes that see this kingdom. God grant it may open upon our vision !

MEDITATION LVII.

“Be not conformed to this world.”

WE believe that the happy day is coming when all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord ; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him ; but at present, where is the Christian who does not suffer from too much conformity to the world ?

For the devout Christian to enter into worldly company, and join in vain amusements, is as if a man were to put a burning torch into water. The flame of devotion will and must be extinguished.

In a large manufactory, filled with people and machinery, we find it difficult to hear each other converse. Still more difficult is it, when too much in the bustle and confusion of company, to hold converse with God.

It is only when compelled to be there in the way of duty, and not otherwise, that we may expect, that as his special favor preserved Daniel in the spirit of prayer even in

Babylon, so it will preserve us. Being immoderately engaged in worldly business, is also another hindrance, filling us with the cares of this life. He whose whole time is incessantly occupied in worldly affairs, finds his heart entirely distracted, and utterly unfitted for holy and retired duties. The apostle says, *Be careful for nothing*; and then adds, *but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.*

It is far better to have a small income with a quiet conscience and a devout heart, than the largest income without God's blessing.

MEDITATION LVIII.

“That no man should be moved by these afflictions.”

WE find it difficult to believe in that almighty goodness that inflicts trials on those whom it loves. Why, we say, should it please God to make us suffer? Why could he not make us good without making us miserable? Doubtless he could, for he is all-powerful; the hearts of men are in his hands, and he can turn them as he will. But He who could save us from sorrow has not chosen to do it; just as he has willed that men should slowly grow from infancy to manhood, instead of creating them at once in maturity. We have only to be silent, and adore his profound wisdom, without comprehending it.

We have need of all our crosses. When we suffer much, it is that we have strong ties that it is necessary to loosen. We resist, and thus retard the divine operation; we repulse the heavenly hand, and it must come again; it would be wiser to yield our-

selves at once to God. It is an excess of self-love that would perfect in a moment, rather than by slow degrees. What is it makes us complain of the length of our trials? It is still this attachment to self, and this is what God would destroy. Why should we complain? The love of the beings and things of this world is our evil, and still more the love of ourselves. Our Father in heaven orders a series of events that gradually detaches us from earth, and finally from self. This operation is painful, but it is the disease of our soul that renders it necessary, and that causes the pain we feel. We weep, we despair, we groan in our spirits, and we murmur against God; he leaves us to our sorrow, and we are saved. He has placed the friends whom he has taken from us in safety, to restore them to us in eternity. He has deprived us of them, that he may teach us to love them with a pure love, a love that we may enjoy in his presence forever.

Of what consequence is it whether this frail house of clay crumble into dust a little sooner or later? What do those lose who

are deprived of those they love? Perhaps they lose only a perpetual delirium; they lose their forgetfulness of God and of themselves, in which they were plunged; or rather they gain by this trial the felicity of detachment from the world; the same stroke that saves the person who dies, prepares others, by suffering, to labor for their own salvation. Is it not then true, that God is good, that he is tender and compassionate towards our real sorrows, even when he strikes us to the heart, and we are tempted to complain of his severity?

Very soon they who are separated will be reunited, and there will appear no trace of the separation. They, who are about to set out upon a journey, ought not to feel themselves far distant from those who have gone to the same country, a few days before. Life is like a torrent; the past is but a dream; the present, while we are thinking of it, escapes us, and is precipitated in the same abyss that has swallowed up the past; the future will not be of a different nature, it will pass as rapidly. A few moments, and a few more, and all will be ended; what has ap-

peared long and tedious, will seem short when it is finished.

The true way to bear trials is to yield ourselves up to God. We suffer, indeed, but He wills this suffering, that it may purify us and render us worthy of Him. The world forgets us, slight us, is ungrateful to us, places us in the rank of those who have passed away; and is it astonishing the world should be unjust, treacherous, and deceitful? And yet it is the same world we have not been ashamed to love so dearly; and that perhaps we still love; and this is the source of our sorrow.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who alone canst see the whole extent of our misery, canst alone cure it. Give us we implore thee, the faith, the hope, the love, the Christian courage we need. Enable us even to raise our eyes to thee, the all-powerful, who will give to thy children only what is for their everlasting good; and to Jesus Christ, thy Son, who is our example in suffering. Raise our hearts,

O our Father ; make them like his, that they may be self-denying, and may fear only thy displeasure and eternal sorrow. O Lord, thou seest the weakness and desolation of the creature of thy hands. It has no resource in itself ; it wants everything, and seeks in thee with confidence, the good it cannot find elsewhere.

MEDITATION LIX.

“Lead us not into temptation.”

BE careful to avoid all exposure to temptation which we are at liberty to avoid. Still it does not always depend upon ourselves, whether we shall escape occasions of sin. Those that belong to the situation in life, in which Providence has placed us, are not under our control. In the moment of temptation we should throw ourselves upon the protection of heaven, as a child, when in danger, flies to the arms of a parent.

The habitual conviction of the presence of God, is the sovereign remedy; it supports, it consoles, it calms us. We must not be surprised that we are tempted. We are placed here to be proved by temptations. Everything is temptation to us. Trials irritate our pride, and prosperity flatters us; our life is a continual warfare, but Jesus Christ combats with us. We must let temptations, like a tempest, beat upon our heads, and still move on; like a traveller, who, surprised

on the way by a storm, wraps his cloak about him, and goes on his journey in spite of the opposing elements.

The work of God is a great work, because it must be done without reserve. His spirit enters the secret foldings of the heart, and even the most upright affections must be regulated by his will ; but it is not constraint and contention that advances us in our Christian course. On the contrary, it is yielding our wills without restriction and without choice, to tread cheerfully every day in the path in which Providence leads us, to seek nothing, to be discouraged by nothing, to see our duty in the present moment, to trust all else, without reserve, to the will and power of God. Let us pray to our heavenly Father that our wills may be swallowed up in his.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, when we are tempted to do what our consciences condemn, may we pause as on the brink of a precipice, and see to it that we are not despoiled of the power and will to serve thee. We would

not be indifferent to the temptations which beset our daily paths. We look to thee for strength to overcome them; and by the experience of life may our perceptions of duty become so clearly revealed to us, that we may be enabled to detect every form of evil, so that with pure and holy motives, we can appeal to thee, the searcher of hearts, for that sustaining power of which we have constant need. Thus may we resist temptation, and become conquerors over every besetting sin. This would we humbly ask through Jesus Christ, while unto thee we ascribe the power forever. Amen.

PRAYERS.

EVENING PRAYER.

I.

O THOU who inhabitest eternity,— with thee is the fountain of life. It is our privilege as well as our duty, to draw near unto thee. It is the prerogative of our nature, that of all creatures in this lower world, we alone are made capable of knowing, resembling, serving, and enjoying thee. All our miseries have been produced by our alienation and absence from thee; and all our happiness and perfection depend upon our reunion and intercourse with thee.

We would, therefore, bless thee for the revelation thou hast given us, and by which we learn that thy thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace and not of evil. We pray that the grand design of the sacrifice

of thy Son may be accomplished in each of us.

May we feel that we are brought back again from the distance, by which we have been conveyed by reason of sin; and may we feel that we are again one with God; and may we henceforth live in communion with the Father of spirits, and be devoted to his service. May thy service be the devotion and employment of our days, and the enjoyment of our hearts. May we love thy commands, and acquiesce in thy dispensations; and then we are at the gate of heaven.

We lament before thee that we live so much under the influence of things seen and temporal, and feel so little the powers of the world to come. How obscure is our knowledge, how weak our faith, how low our hope, how lifeless our devotion.

Lord clothe us with humility,—afford us more of the supply of the spirit of thy Son,—give more decision to our character, more earnestness to our zeal, that with enlarged hearts in the way of thy commands, we may run and not be weary, and walk and

not faint. May we bear with firmness and submission the various trials of life and religion, and derive from them all the advantages which they are designed to afford; and may every day of trouble afford us an opportunity to prove the truth of thy promise, the tenderness of thy care, and the support of thy grace.

We praise thee for the protection and supplies of another day. Take us under thy care for the night on which we have entered. May no evil befall us, or come near our dwellings. Refresh our bodies and renew our strength by needful repose; and when we awake may we be still with God. We ask and offer all through Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER.

II.

O THOU who art the Author of all existence, and the source of all blessedness. We adore thee for making us capable of knowing thee ; for possessing us with reason and conscience, and for leading us to inquire, is God my maker that giveth songs in the night.

We praise thee for all the capacities with which we are favored to bring us to thyself ; especially the revelation of the Gospel of thy Son. Here we look into thy very heart, and see that it is the dwelling place of pity. Here we see thy thoughts toward us, and find that they are thoughts of peace. Here thou hast told our consciences how the guilty can be pardoned, the unholy can be sanctified, and the poor furnished with unsearchable riches.

May we be found in the number of those who not only hear, but know the joyful sound, that we may walk in the light of thy countenance. May we take thee, the God of truth, at thy word ; and believe the record,

that thou hast given to us eternal life through thy Son.

To the example of thy Son may we ever repair, remembering how short and uncertain our time is, and filled with holy horror at the thought of closing a life of precious but neglected privileges, with the exclamation, the harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. We desire to leave sin, to be restored to thy image, and to be reinstated in thy favor.

We implore spiritual graces as well as spiritual blessings, and pray that we may always value religious duties and religious privileges. Free us from the disposition of the slave, and sustain us in all our goings by thy free spirit; and enable us to run in the way of thy commands with freedom and delight.

May we ever nourish simplicity and godly sincerity of character; may we be in reality before God what we are before men, Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile. May we *be* religious while we *profess* religion, and not be looking after the vanities of the world; but having our affections set

on things that are above, walk worthy of Him who has called us to his kingdom and glory.

And freely having received may we freely give ; may we feel it to be the sublimest of all satisfactions, and count it the greatest of all rewards, to save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins ; and while we are striving to do good may we be prepared to bear evil ; and if reviled may we revile not again ; or if oppressed or slighted, never grow weary in well doing.

May we avail ourselves of our opportunity, and invite those around us to taste and see that the Lord is good, while it is day, knowing that the night cometh wherein no man can work.

And now, O Father, count us worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power, through Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

III.

O THOU that hearest prayer, we praise thee for the blessings of thy providence, which encompass us on every side, and are continued to us, notwithstanding our unworthiness. Thou hast given us life and favor, and secured to us personal and relative comforts.

Above all, we bless thee for the gift of thy Son, the Saviour of the world. Here our hopes find anchorage; here, believing, we enter into rest; here all our wants and woes find redress and supplies. O may our souls be united to this Saviour by a divine faith; he the head, we the members; he the vine, we the branches. May we be his disciples, and learn of him; his soldiers, and war under his banner; his beneficiaries, and live upon his fulness.

And when viewing our trials and duties, and our weakness makes us despond, may we hear the voice that cries, *my grace shall be sufficient for thee.*

May we be followers of Him who went about doing good,— who was meek and lowly in heart, who said, my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work. Subdue in us the selfishness that is so common to our nature, and excite in us a disposition to seek after the welfare of others. May sentiments of benevolence and kindness mingle with all our thoughts, words, and actions,— may we be good to the unthankful and evil, that we may be the children of our Father who is in heaven.

May we improve well our time and our talent, that more may be given, and be concerned to receive from the Judge of all, the approving sentence of our having done what we could. May we be the honored instruments of having saved some soul from death; and of producing joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. And wilt thou render us successful among those who are under our instruction and influence. May we rule well our house, and have the pleasure to see all the members of our family fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER.

IV.

O God, we come before thee as sinners, and would address thee in the language of the publican of old, and would say from the heart, God be merciful to me a sinner. Sinners thy word declares us to be, and sinners may we feel ourselves to be.

But thou hast given us assurance that with thee there is mercy and plenteous redemption. To that throne, from which none were ever repulsed or sent empty away, we again approach for mercy and grace to help in time of need. Preserve us from formality in these exercises in which we so often engage, lest we should provoke thee to say, in vain do they worship me.

Lord we believe, help thou our unbelief; that sin is exceedingly sinful; that it is the abominable thing which thy soul hateth; and this alone separates between thee and us. The essential attributes of thy nature are such that thou canst not make us happy *with* thyself, till thou hast made us holy *like*

thyself. Deliver us from all our iniquities, cleanse us, O God, from secret faults. May we consent to the law of God, that it is good. May we delight in thy law after the inner man. May we never complain of the strictness of thy demands, but lament our want of conformity to them.

May we esteem all thy commands concerning all things to be right, and hate every false way. Put thy spirit within us, that our practice may spring from principle, and our dispositions be congenial with duty, so that we may resemble Him who could say, my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Take us this day under thy protection, and make use of us for thy glory. Bless us in our intercourse with the world. Let thy presence go with us, and do thou give us rest. Let thy love sweeten all our comforts, and let thy grace sanctify all our trials; may we consecrate ourselves wholly to thee. Accept our services, and enable us to ascribe blessing and honor to Him who sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

V.

OUR Father who art in heaven, thou hast commended thy love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; and thou hast sent the Gospel to announce the intelligence, that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

O thou, God of all grace, as thou hast given us a Saviour, produce in us that faith by which we shall be enabled to receive Him and make Him all our desire, all our hope, and all our glory. May we enter Him as our refuge, build on Him as our foundation, walk in Him as our way, follow Him as our guide, and conform to Him as our example.

Preserve us from the present evil world. May its smiles never allure, nor its frowns ever terrify us from the path of duty. May we not live looking at the things that are seen and temporal, but as heirs of immortality, may we feel that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and declare plain-

ly that we seek a country, and may our title to it daily become more clear, and our meet-ness for it more perfect, and our foretastes of it more abundant.

May we never consider ourselves as de-tached individuals; may we look not every man on his own things only, but also on the things of others. May we love our neighbor as ourselves; may we do good to all as we have opportunity, even to the evil and unthankful; may we teach transgressors thy way, and be the means of converting sinners unto thee; and may none of our efforts to do good be rendered fruitless, by inconsistent or reproachful conduct. May we be what we profess, and do what we teach. May all with whom we are connect-ed see as well as hear our religion, and be coastrained to acknowledge that we are indeed the seed which the Lord hath blessed.

May we be ever willing that the Lord should choose our inheritance for us, and cheerfully accommodate ourselves to the dis-pensations of thy providence. Produce in us all the feelings of those who are blessed with repentance unto life. Give us that

faith by which we can be justified from all things, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. To our Redeemer may we retreat, and there find security and relief, refreshment and delight. Assure us of an interest in thy favor, which is life, and clothe us with thine image, which is the beauty and dignity of the soul.

May our religion always attend us, and give us dignity and strength in all the ordinary scenes of life. May we remember that greatness consists not in doing great things, but in doing little things with a great mind. As the events of providence occur, may they always find in us those dispositions which will keep them from injuring us, and which will convert them all to our advantage. And thus may we be prepared by thy discipline towards us on earth, to draw near to thee as our exceeding joy, and contemplate the period when we shall behold thy face in righteousness, and be satisfied with thy favor. Through Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

SABBATH MORNING PRAYER.

VI.

O GOD our heavenly Father, we would approach thee with reverence and godly fear. We would also come before thee with humble confidence, for thy condescension equals thy grandeur, and thy goodness is thy glory.

If we are guilty thou art merciful ; if we are all indigence, thy riches are unsearchable. In the gift of thine own Son thou hast shown thy boundless compassion toward a perishing world, and proved that with him thou wilt also freely give us all things. Thus a foundation is laid for our hope, a refuge is open for our safety, and a new and living way is consecrated for our approach to thee.

Bless us with that conviction of sin, that brokenness of heart, which will endear us to the gospel message as a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance ; and induce us to say with the apostle, that I may win Christ and be found in Him ; that I may know

Him and the power of his resurrection. How happy are they who are found interested in Him, that they may have peace with God, and become heirs of eternal glory.

May we feel an increased concern to know whether these exalted privileges are indeed ours. For this purpose may we frequently and carefully examine ourselves. May we cultivate that nonconformity to the world, that love to the Saviour, that attachment to his word, that devotion to his service, which characterize the subjects of his salvation.

May these things be in us and abound. May we not only have life, but may we have it more abundantly. It becomes us to be thankful that if thou hast begun a good work in us, we are allowed to pray that thou wilt perfect that which concerneth us. According to the riches of thy grace wilt thou strengthen us by thy spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith ; that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and to know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

May every part of our character and conduct correspond, and make not only a serious but an amiable impression on the minds of those about us, that they may say, we will go with you, for we believe that God is with you.

Lend us help this day from the sanctuary, and strengthen us out of Zion. Thine own appointments were never intended to make us independent of thy agency. Without thy blessing, the best means will prove in vain. Thou hast promised to bless the provisions of thy house, and to fill the poor with bread. Thou hast said that in all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and will bless thee. Thou art faithful to thy word.

Enter, as an instructor and comforter, all the abodes of sorrow. Be the father of the fatherless, and the husband of the widow. Guide those who are perplexed, guard those who are tempted; and let all who love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might, and thine shall be the glory forever. Amen.

SABBATH EVENING PRAYER.

VII.

OUR heavenly Father, thy presence fills immensity. It is thy pleasure to produce life, and to communicate happiness. From thee we have derived all we have and all we are. Thy good providence has determined the bounds of our habitation, and wisely administered all our affairs.

But especially do we bless thee for the exceeding riches of thy grace, in thy kindness toward us by Jesus Christ. Thanks be unto thee for this unspeakable gift, and for the unclouded revelation of Him in thy word. There we behold his person and character, his grace and glory. Thou hast sent thine own Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

To him may we turn, and find in him the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, which, as sinners, we need. In all our approaches to thee, may we have boldness and access, and with confidence by

faith through Him, may we rejoice in Him as our sympathizing friend, our almighty helper, and our lovely example. May we drink into his spirit. May we transcribe the excellencies of his character into our own. May we place our feet into the very prints of his steps, and follow him in the regeneration, till we shall be perfectly like him and see him as he is.

May we never draw back, never turn aside to the right hand or to the left, never stand still, never look back, never come short through unbelief, but be always abounding in the word of the Lord. Though we are ignorant of the future, and know not what a day may bring forth, keep us from being of a doubtful mind. May we go on our way rejoicing, persuaded that all thy dispensations are designed and adapted to prove that thou carest for us.

Till we arrive at heaven, our home, may we gratefully avail ourselves of all the advantages afforded us on our journey. We bless thee for the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and the ministry of the word. Let not our privileges increase our guilt, and aggravate

our condemnation in the day of final accounts.

May the truths which we have this day heard be residents in our hearts. May the words of Christ dwell in us richly, in all wisdom. And though the exercises in which we have been engaged are transient, may the effects produced by them be deep and durable; may the devotional spirit of the Sabbath actuate us in the absence of its forms; and whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, may we do all to the glory of God.

Regard all thy professing churches; bless them with soundness of doctrine, purity and liberality of discipline, sincerity and amiableness of character in their members, and the Lord add to his people an hundred fold, and let all the families of the earth be blessed in Him who is our salvation and desire, to whom be glory in the church forever. Amen.

SABBATH MORNING PRAYER.

VIII.

OUR Father who art in heaven, we have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and are not worthy to be called thy children ; and are not worthy of the least of all thy mercies. We have merited thy displeasure, and thou wouldest have been just in casting us from thy presence.

Wilt thou produce in us that sensibility of soul which will lead us to feel our sin, to deplore our guilt, and to cast ourselves on thy mercy. Impart to us that faith which will enable us to hope in thy word, and derive strong consolation from the invitations and promises of the Gospel. We do not come to thee unbidden or uncalled ; thou hast called us by thy grace, and it is thy command that we should believe on the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ. May we take him as our Saviour, our example, our guide. Like him may we do good to those about us, and may we learn of him, who is meek and lowly in heart, that we may find rest for our souls.

May our minds be fixed and filled with admiring thoughts of his person and his offices,—may our hearts be inflamed with a sense of his boundless compassion and love. By the new and living way which he has not only revealed, but consecrated for us, may we come to thee, and enjoy all the advantages of a state of reconciliation and friendship with God. May the most open and familiar intercourse be maintained between thee and our souls. To thee may we commit our way and our works; and in everything by prayer and supplication make known our requests unto God; and be thou always near to guard and defend us; to relieve us in trouble, and to help us in duty. And may we walk humbly with our God; wondering at the condescension that deigns to regard our mean affairs,—the kindness that employs so many means to advance our everlasting welfare.

Through Christ, as the way, the truth, and the life, may we return to thee, and find thee waiting to be gracious, and willing to have mercy upon us. Awaken our consciences. Enlighten us in the knowledge of sin and of

ourselves. May we feel our own helplessness, and from self-despair may we be led to value the discoveries of the Gospel. May we rejoice in the suitableness, the sufficiency, and willingness of the Saviour. As our prophet, may we receive his instructions. As our priest, may we rely on his sacrifice and intercession. As our prince, may we obey him. As our example may we follow him,—and whatsoever we do, whether in word or deed, may we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

May integrity and uprightness preserve us. May we be Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; and herein exercise ourselves, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. May the same mind govern us, and the same spirit actuate us, in prosperity and in adversity; alone and in public, in thy house and in our own; may we fulfil our course with diligence and perseverance, and at last finish it with joy, and have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER.

IX.

O GOD, thou art our Creator, our Preserver. We cannot escape from thy presence or control. It is our happiness as well as our privilege, that we are under the agency not only of omnipotence, but righteousness, wisdom, and mercy. Thou art love. Thou hast loved us with more than paternal affection ; yea thou hast watched over us with more than maternal solicitude.

Thou hast commended thy love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? Here may all our fears drop from our mind ; here may we be filled with everlasting consolation, and good hope through thine infinite love.

Thou hast commanded us to believe on the name of thy Son. O let us not refuse to be comforted, let us not reject the counsel of God ; but remember that we are welcome, and may we drink of the fountain of the water of life freely. And while we

know that we may come to the Redeemer, and ought to come, may we never think ourselves interested in the blessings of his salvation until we have come. May there be a real and living union between our souls and Him; that being quickened together with Christ, we may be raised up, and made to sit with him in heavenly places. May we live a life of faith in thy promises, that thou wilt give grace and glory, and wilt withhold no good thing while we walk uprightly. May we live a life of love, for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. O shed abroad thy love in our hearts, the animating and delightful principle of all obedience. May we love our neighbor as ourselves, and consider every one as our neighbor, who falls within the reach of our knowledge and influence.

May we never consider ourselves Christians but as we resemble Christ. May our conformity to his principles, temper, and conduct, be hourly growing, and become more apparent, not only to ourselves but to others. And may we continue in his word, and be his disciples indeed, rooted and established in the truth.

May we also prove blessings ; may we look closely at our talents, relations, and circumstances in life, to see how we can be serviceable to the bodies and souls of our fellow-creatures. We are continually meeting with wants and miseries which we are unable to relieve ; but we rejoice that prayer opens a resource to our benevolence, and prayer has a power with God, and can prevail.

Let our afflictions render sin hateful, and wean us from a vain world, endear us to the word of thy grace, to the throne of thy grace, and to the spirit of thy grace ; and work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Let our ignorance of futurity keep us in a state of constant dependence upon thy providential care, and lead us earnestly to seek large supplies of the spirit of Christ to fit us for all events. Let the joy of the Lord be our strength.

When we droop, revive us ; when we loiter, quicken us ; restore us, when we go astray, and lead us in the paths of righteousness, for thy name's sake. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

X.

O LORD, thy goodness to us is infinite. What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou regardest him? And yet thou hast been mindful of us; thou hast visited us. We have been thy charge from infancy; thou hast in all conditions cared for us. We have been constantly fed from thy table, and clothed from thy wardrobe. How often hast thou drawn the curtain of the evening and ordered creation to be quiet, while thy children have slumbered and slept. Thy mercies have been new every morning. Thy goodness has inspired our friends with all the tenderness they have ever expressed toward us; and may we never overlook or slight the blessings of the life that now is.

But, O Lord, may we never be unmindful that we want better things than these. We need a hope beyond the grave. We are depraved, dying creatures. We need pardon, and holiness, and wisdom, and strength, and

peace, and joy. We want the foretastes of immortality.

Thanks to thy name that these blessings have been provided ; that we have had our birth and education in a land of Gospel privileges ; that one of the first sounds that entered our infant ears from the lips of maternal piety, was the name of Jesus, and the good news of salvation through a Redeemer. We rejoice that we have been led to view Him not only as a teacher and example, but as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.

Possess us with more of that faith which is the principle and medium of all vital godliness ; may we be rich in faith, may we be strong in faith. By faith may we live ; by faith may we walk. May we abound in hope ; may the charity of every one of us toward each other increase ; and may we be filled with all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus, to the praise and glory of God.

We lament our insensibility to the claims of thy authority, and the endearments of thy love ; how little have we credited thy truth,

trusted thy promises, feared thy threatenings, and obeyed thy commands, or improved our privileges. We have had precept upon precept. How numberless have been our admonitions and warnings, and how manifold have been our advantages and our blessings. And yet thou art ever good and gracious to us, even to the evil and unthankful. We are yet in the land of the living. Through another day thou hast spared us, and blessed us. May thy goodness lead us to repentance, and thy long-suffering prove our salvation. Let no evil befall us this night, and in the morning may we rise to walk before the Lord in the land of the living, and to show forth all his praise. In the name of our Intercessor and Judge we offer all prayer, through whom to thee be glory forever. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER.

XI.

OUR voice, O Lord, shalt thou hear in the morning, and in the morning will we look up, while we direct our prayer unto thee. What reason have we to be thankful. During the past night how many have been left without shelter; many have been the victims of disease, and many have been deprived of rest, while watching their friends, in pain and sorrow. How many have slept the sleep of death. Others, whose lives are prolonged; have arisen to be surrounded with want and wo; and thousands, who have all things richly to enjoy, have arisen only to live another day without God in the world.

But thou, O Lord, hast remembered, distinguished, and indulged us. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Thy mercies have been new every morning; yea, every moment. If our desires have not all been gratified, it has been thy love which has denied them, when what we have wished would have proved our ruin.

Thou hast never chastened us but for our profit, and may we be ever made wiser and better by all thy discipline toward us, and may we feel that thy work is perfect, thou hast done all things well.

What shall we render unto thee for the word of thy truth, the throne of thy grace, the Son of thy love? What do we owe him for his instructions, his precepts, and his example, and for the hope that when He, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory, and be forever with the Lord.

And, O thou fountain of all good, we come to thee for grace to aid us this day,— for the grace that its duties will require, for the grace that its events will require; for we know not when we leave our house what a day will bring forth.

We know that we are stepping into an evil world, surrounded by mixed influences,— that our heart is sinful, and we know that there is nothing with which we shall have any concern in the day, however harmless in itself, but may prove an occasion of sin. Wilt thou, O Lord, hold us up,

and we shall be safe ; preserve our understandings from the subtlety of error, our senses from ungovernable impressions of outward objects, our character from every stain of vice, and our profession from every appearance of evil ; and may the God of peace sanctify us wholly, and may our whole spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord.

May we engage in nothing on which we cannot implore thy blessing, and to which we cannot welcome thine inspection. Prosper us in our lawful undertakings, or prepare us for disappointment. Give us neither poverty nor riches. May every creature be good to us, being sanctified by the word of God and prayer. May we walk with wisdom and kindness toward all with whom we have intercourse, and do good as we have opportunity to all men, and glorify thee in all that we do, through Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER.

XII.

O GOD, thou hast been pleased to reveal thyself unto us as far as our wants require. We have not been called to worship an unknown God, but we can discern thee as a God hearing prayer.

Thou hast never said to any of the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain ; but a throne of mercy has been established from the beginning for thy people, to which may we repair, amid all our difficulties, necessities, and distresses, and find it thus good to draw nigh unto thee. Impart to thy servants a spirit of supplication ; may we ever live in that devotional frame of mind that will give us immediate and pleasing intercourse with thee ; in all our concerns of life, may our thoughts ascend to God ; and by a habitual devotion may we find a resource that will soothe our sorrows, sanctify our success, and qualify us for all our dealings with our fellow-men.

May we ever give thanks to thee, that we

have been made capable of knowing thee, the author of all life ; of resembling thee, the perfection of all excellency, and of enjoying thee, the source of all happiness. Though we are not worthy a share in thy loving kindness, it is thy good pleasure that we may seek after it, and thou hast said that those hearts shall live that seek good.

May we be accepted in thy beloved Son, and know that through Him we have redemption, even the remission of our sins ; may we view Him as the source of all that grace by which we are renewed in the spirit of our minds. May we always contemplate our duties in connexion with those promises, which insure strength for the performance of them ; and though weak in ourselves, may we be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Attend us, O our Father, in every part of our earthly pilgrimage. We need the same counsel, the same defence, the same comfort and consolation which we implored at the commencement of our journey. May we live by thy spirit, and may we walk in thy spirit, and may our path be as the shining

light that shineth more and more to the perfect day.

May our religion be more apparent to our own consciences, and more perceptible to those about us. May all with whom we have intercourse take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus. And while he is representing us in heaven, may we represent him on the earth; while he pleads our cause, may we be concerned in all things to show forth his praise, who is making all things work together for our good.

Be very gracious to our absent friends, and make them members of thy household, and let all that love thy salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified. Continue the gentleness of thy goodness to this household.

And to thy tender care, which has watched over us another night, we commit ourselves for the duties and events of another day. Let thy presence go with us, and thy blessing attend us; and whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, may we do it heartily as unto the Lord, and live together with Christ. To whom be glory in the church forever. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

XIII.

OUR Father who art in heaven, thy commands and thy promises, our duty and our privilege, all conspire to induce us to approach the throne of thy grace, for our only hope is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

With thee is mercy and plenteous redemption. Thou art rich unto all who call upon thee, and thou wilt never forsake those who earnestly and devoutly seek thee.

Deliver us, O Lord, from the bondage of sin, and bring us into the glorious liberty of thy children; that being made free from sin, and become servants of God, we may have our fruit unto holiness, and our end everlasting life. May we feel that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature; and in review of our religious state and character, may we look after that kingdom, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Give us a well grounded hope of being one day presented before the presence of thy glory, when we shall see thee without obscurity, approach thee without sin, serve thee without imperfection, and enjoy thee without sorrow. May our path be as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Complete that which is lacking in our faith. Lead us into all truth, and let our hearts be well established with grace. Fill our souls with the sublime and elevating objects of revelation, that the objects of sense may find no place in our hearts.

Ever keep near us the affecting motives of the Gospel, that we may not be able to sin, but in the full view of thine all-seeing eye, and the retributions of eternity.

We beseech thee also, that we may increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from us, with all malice ; may we be kind one toward another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us.

Fit us, we pray thee, for all the duties and trials of life. We bless thee for thy promises, which provide against every want that we may feel; and for every condition in which we can be found. In God may we praise his word. In the Lord may we put our trust. May we not fear what man can do unto us.

We commend ourselves, with all that we have, and all our friends, and those who have desired an interest in our prayers, to thy pardoning mercy for the night that is before us. O thou that givest thy beloved sleep, indulge us with refreshing repose, or if awake, may thy song be with us, and our prayer unto the God of our life. To whom be glory forever. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

XIV.

O GOD, our heavenly Father, in thy presence may we feel thy majesty, as well as adore thy mercy, that we may not trifle before thee, or incur the reproach of the hypocrite and the formalist, who draw near thee with their mouth, and honor thee with their lips, while the heart is far from thee. And may we be equally impressed with thy goodness as well as thy greatness, that we may draw near thee in the full assurance of faith. May our consciences attest that thou art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all who call upon thee.

May the life that we henceforth shall live in the flesh, be by faith on the Son of God ; by the faith of Him who loved us and gave himself for us. In his name may we rejoice all the day, and in his righteousness be exalted.

May we have an increasing conformity to the person of thy Son. Like Him, may we go about doing good, and learn obedience

from the things we suffer. May the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus make us free from the law of sin and death.

In all our dealings with men, may we do justly ; and in all cases and situations requiring relief and compassion, may we show that we love mercy ; and in regard to all the dispensations of thy providence and grace, may we walk humbly with thee our God.

May we be strong in the Lord, following our own convictions of duty, regardless of the opinions of men ; careful of obeying God, rather than man. Having learned the knowledge of thy will from the word of truth, may we go forward in duty ; be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Not slothful, but fervent in spirit, followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

How many and great are thy promises, which thou hast in store for them who fear thee ; number us with them, and enable us to say, thou hast given me the heritage of them that fear thy name. Give us this assurance, O our Father, to quicken us in duty ; to support us in our trials. Amid all

the uncertainties of this life, may we have confidence in ourselves, that in heaven we have a better and enduring substance.

May we feel that we are poor and needy ; we daily need our supplies of food ; we labor for a few hours and feel that we are exhausted. But we bless thee for the promise we have, that when we lie down thou wilt make us to dwell in safety ; and for the assurance of a state where we shall feel no languor, need no rest ; where there shall be no night, and where we shall enjoy thy presence forever and ever. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

XV.

O God, thou art everywhere present, and knowest all our thoughts. Let it be fixed in our minds deeply and forever, that whatever we say, think, or do, is said, and thought, and done in the presence of a being of infinite purity. May we approach thee with all the encouragement that can be derived from thy character, as a God of love. And although we cannot find thee out unto perfection, we know that thou art good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all who call upon thee in sincerity and in truth.

Thou hast given us thy word, and thou hast favored us with thy Gospel, so that on us, who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, has arisen the light of life.

We have to acknowledge with what ingratitude we have received thy benefits, and how little we have improved our privileges to the purposes for which they have been given. We have made light of things which angels have desired to look into, and have neglect-

ed the great salvation. We have turned from Him who speaketh from heaven. All that thou hast kindly employed to enforce the messages of thy love, we have disregarded. We have contemned the examples of the good, the admonitions of friendship, the reproaches of conscience, the rebukes of thy providence, and the strivings of thy Holy Spirit. But, O Lord, may we not confess our sins without feeling and lamenting them, and may we not only feel our sins with a broken heart and contrite spirit, but may our devout and incessant prayers ascend to thee, that we may never more be so insensible to thy holy discipline, and may every coming hour have a new and sacred value in our eyes.

Under all our ignorance, weakness, fears, and depressions, may thy spirit help our infirmities with supplies of wisdom, strength, and comfort; and as we feel that we can be never happy in sin, wilt thou, O Lord, deliver us from it, and lead us in the way that is everlasting. Make us holy like thyself, that we may be happy in thee, and enable us from the heart to say, whom have

we in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that we desire beside thee.

Enlighten our eyes, that we may never more confound good with evil, and mistake the fashion and show of earth for the everlasting realities of heaven. Whatsoever is truly important may it occupy the highest place in our affections, and whatever is vain and temporary, let it no more engross our thoughts. May we ever see our highest good in a single heart and righteous life.

O God, we call upon thee to witness our good resolutions. We need the light which thou alone canst give. We need strength, and to thee would we look, O thou source of all power. May we often review life, and see how we have at any time been ensnared or overcome, that we may in future become more wise and circumspect ; and while we watch may we also pray, that we enter not into temptation. May we never trust in our own hearts, or depend upon any past experience, or present resolution ; but be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, through whom to thee be glory forever. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

XVI.

O LORD of hosts, thou hast established thy throne in the heavens, and thy kingdom ruleth over all. It is a source of joy to our souls, and of encouragement to our hopes, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. In thy greatness we see thy all-sufficiency to accomplish all that thou hast promised ; to confer upon us all that we need or desire ; and to do for us infinitely above all that we can ask or think.

May we, therefore, find it good to call upon thee ; and it is our privilege to know that we can approach thee with confidence of acceptance and success, through thine own appointed Mediator, Jesus Christ the righteous. In his name and for his sake, who died for us, and who now appears in thy presence for us, pardon our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and translate us into the kingdom of thy Son. May our intercourse with thee be free and delightful, and may we constantly have fel-

lowship with thee and thy Son, and in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, may we make known our requests unto thee. May we live in thy presence continually.

May we walk humbly with our God, sensible of our imperfections and deficiencies; admiring thy condescension and patience, and acquiescing in all thy dispensations without a murmur of complaint. May we walk circumspectly, in all wisdom, redeeming the time. May we be zealous in the discharge of all those duties, the performance of which depend on a season so fleeting and precarious; and enable us to feel the universality and perfection of thy agency in all our affairs; and knowing that all thy ways are mercy and truth, may we learn in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content. Yea, in everything may we give thanks.

May we not only submit to our trials, but may we be grateful for them. May we feel that they are designed for our profit, that we may be partakers of thy holiness. They evince a care for us, of which we are un-

worthy, and which we have never properly repaid. Lord what is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? that thou shouldest set thy heart upon him? that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and chasten him every moment?

O Lord, abandon us not to ourselves; treat us not with neglect. Employ whatever means are necessary to sanctify and save our souls. May we faithfully study our character, and be always willing to come to the light, that if evil, our deeds may be reprobated. May we peculiarly observe ourselves, under the operation of those events which are designed to try us; that we may judge of the reality and degree of our grace. May we often review life, and see how we have at any time been ensnared, or overcome, that we may in future become more wise and circumspect; and while we watch may we also pray, lest we enter into temptation. May we never trust in our own hearts, or depend upon any past experience or present resolutions; but be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Through whom to thee be glory forever. Amen.

SABBATH MORNING PRAYER.

XVII.

OUR Father who art in heaven, refreshed by slumber, we stand upon the threshold of another day, a day of rest, of meditation and prayer. May it be sanctified in the outward observance, and in spirit, and in truth. Let the holy light of the Son of righteousness dawn upon our souls, dispelling unhallowed thoughts, revealing thy glorious presence, and leading us onward to that better life, upon which, through thy grace, we may enter when we will.

We are not worthy of an audience at thy footstool,—are not worthy of the least of all thy mercies. Our sins have separated us from thee. But thou art good as well as great, and thy goodness constitutes thy greatness. As the manifestation of thy love thou hast sent thy Son ; assuming our nature, he came into this world not to be ministered unto, but to minister. We rejoice to see, in his triumph over the grave, the evidence of the all-sufficiency and acceptation of the sacrifice he offered on the cross. Help us

to consider him as a risen Saviour ; and may we feel the power of his resurrection in establishing our faith, enlivening our hope, and securing our sanctification. May we not only believe in his resurrection, but be partakers of it, and resemble it ; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also might walk in newness of life ; accounting ourselves to be indeed dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And if we are risen with Christ, may we give evidence of it by seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth. May we never leave our spiritual and everlasting condition undecided and unknown ; may we never be satisfied till we are able to say, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.

In all our difficulties and dangers, may we rejoice that he who was dead is alive again, to plead for us, and that in all the af-

flictions of life, in the decay of nature, and when looking into the horrors of the grave, may we with humble and holy confidence be able to say, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

And when we are called to mourn over the loss of those who are near and dear to us by earthly ties, or Christian sympathy, let us not sorrow as those who have no hope, but comfort one another with these words,— that as Jesus died and rose again, even them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

We glory also in the victory which our risen Saviour has obtained over the powers of sin; that his word is translating into every language, and his Gospel, with his servants, are entering every clime. We hail what has been done as a pledge of universal triumph; and though we as yet see not all things put under him, we see him for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor. Through him we would now address thee, as our Father who art in heaven, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

SABBATH EVENING PRAYER.

XVIII.

O THOU who givest us all things richly to enjoy,—all things needful for the body and healthful for the soul, we would meditate on thy mercies, on the blessings of the past day, the health and strength which have been continued to us, the spiritual privileges in which we have been permitted to share. Give us the wings of faith and prayer, that we may rise from earth to heaven.

May we approach thee with the humility which is due to thy greatness, and the hope that becomes thy goodness ; for though thou art continually adored by thrones, and dominions, and powers, yet thou despisest not the prayer of the destitute, but wilt hear their prayer. Enable us suitably to appreciate the blessings of the life that now is. We have food and raiment, we have health and friends, who are interested in our welfare. We have a comfortable habitation. For these mercies, O our Father, would we bless thee. But these are not our God.

Thou art the strength of our hearts and our portion forever. We long with unshaken confidence to be able to say, thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. O say to our souls in language our consciences can understand, I am thy salvation ; and give us a token for good, that we may rejoice in thee.

May we walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God ; strengthened with all might according to his gracious power, unto all patience and long suffering, with joyfulness ; giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. If we can never discharge the obligations thy abundant mercy has laid us under, may we ever show that we are sensible of them, and may our impressed hearts be continually asking, what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me ?

May we be effectually deterred from sin, and induced to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. May the holy influences of the day that has now closed, be

and abide with us forever. If we have this day received any spiritual good, any elevating views of thy character or thy government, and of our duty, — has a sense of our sins been awakened within us, has our pride been humbled, have our hearts been softened, or our minds more seriously impressed, — wilt thou, O Father, deepen and fix the good impression.

After the repose of this night, shouldst thou see fit to continue us in life, we shall be again surrounded by the cares and temptations of the world. Pleasure will again seek to beguile us, and passion will importune us to forget thee and all the good resolutions which we have this day formed. When we are thus situated, may it appear that this day has been well spent, that our religious services have quickened our consciences, and we have received a new impulse in the way of life. Give us strength, we pray thee, to fulfil all holy purposes, to control all our passions, and to subject all our conduct to the requisitions of reason and right, and to live in all respects as becomes the disciples of thy Son. Through whom to thee be glory forever. Amen.

EJACULATORY PRAYERS FROM SCRIPTURE.

XIX.

I LAID me down and slept; I awaked, for thou, Lord, sustained me.

At evening, and at morning, and at noon-day will I pray, and that instantly.

I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest, for it is thou, Lord, only that makest me to dwell in safety.

Lord bless my going out and coming in, from this time forth for evermore.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep thou the door of my lips.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.

Prosper thou the work of my hands, O Lord; prosper my handy work.

Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Lord lay not this sin to their charge.

The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God ?

Lord cleanse thou me from secret faults ; keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me.

Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto thee.

Lord I am oppressed, undertake thou for me.

The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

Lord teach us to pray.

Quicken thou us and we will call upon thy name.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord ; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

We will go into his tabernacle ; yea, we will worship at his footstool.

This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

Sanctify us through thy truth ; thy word is truth.

O Lord be gracious unto us, we have waited for thee.

Father, glorify thy name.

Lord, save us, we perish.

Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for unto thee will I pray.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within me. Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary.

For thy mercy's sake, O Lord, save me. Our fathers cried unto thee and were delivered.

My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.

O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, who forgiveth all thy sins, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.

SCRIPTURE PRAYERS.

XX.

O LORD, open thou our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Teach us thy statutes ; make us to understand the way of thy precepts. Open, Lord, our understandings, that we may understand the Scriptures ; open our hearts to attend to the things spoken of in thy word.

May the spirit of truth teach us all things, and guide us into all truth.

O Lord, our heavenly Father, whose word endureth forever, grant that laying aside all malice, all guile, and hypocricies, and envies, and evil speaking, we may as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby.

O thou, who art the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto us the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of our understandings being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of thy calling, and what the riches of the glory of thy

inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of thy power to those who believe, according to the working of thy mighty power.

Grant, O Lord, that we may receive thy word with all readiness of mind, as it is in truth, the word of God. Incline our hearts to do thy will, that we may know of the doctrine whether it be of God. And give us the love of truth, that we may be saved.

O Lord, our God, give us an understanding heart, that we may discern between good and bad. Show us thy ways, O Lord, teach us thy paths, lead us in thy truth, and teach us, for thou art the God of our salvation.

O that our ways were directed to keep thy statutes. Then shall we not be ashamed, when we have respect unto thy commandments.

Lord put thy spirit within us, and cause us to walk in thy statutes, and keep thy judgments and do them. Grant that we may be filled with the knowledge of thy will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; and that we may walk worthy of thee

unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in all the knowledge of God.

Lord grant that by the Holy Scriptures we may be made wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. May we receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls, and obey from the heart that form of doctrine which has been delivered unto us. Put thy laws into our minds, and write them in our hearts; and let us not be forgetful hearers but doers of thy word. Grant also, that receiving thy word now with gladness, we may never hereafter be offended by affliction or persecution, and so become unfruitful; nor let thy word be choked by the cares of this world; but give us grace to receive it into good and honest hearts, and bring forth fruit unto eternal life, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL POETRY.

GOD IS LOVE. BOWRING.

I.

God is Love ; his mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove ;
Bliss he wakes, and woe he lightens ;
God is wisdom, God is love.

Chance and change are busy ever ;
Man decays and ages move ;
But his mercy waneth never,
God is wisdom, God is love.

Even the hour that darkest seemeth,
Will his changeless goodness prove ;
From the mist his brightness streameth ;
God is wisdom, God is love.

He with earthly cares entwineth,
Hope and comfort from above ;
Everywhere his glory shineth,
God is wisdom, God is love.

CHRIST'S INVITATION.

II.

COME unto me, all ye who mourn,
With guilt and fears opprest ;
Resign to me the willing heart,
And I will give you rest.

Take up my yoke and learn of me,
A meek and lowly mind ;
And thus your weary, troubled souls
Repose and peace shall find.

For light and gentle is my yoke ;
The burden, I impose,
Shall ease the heart which groaned before,
Beneath a load of woes.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD. JOHNS.

III.

COME, kingdom of our God,
Sweet reign of light and love !
Shed peace, and hope, and joy abroad,
And wisdom from above.

Over our spirits first,
Extend thy healing reign ;

There raise and quench the sacred thirst,
That never pains again.

Come, kingdom of our God !
And make the broad earth thine,
Stretch o'er her lands and isles the rod,
That flowers with grace divine.

Soon may all tribes be blest
With fruit from life's glad tree ;
And in its shade like brothers rest
Sons of one family.

Come, kingdom of our God !
And raise thy glorious throne
In worlds by the undying trod,
Where God shall bless his own.

CONVERSING WITH GOD. J. WESLEY.

IV.

SPEAK with us, Lord ! thyself reveal,
While here on earth we rove ;
Speak to our hearts, and let us feel
The kindling of thy love.

With thee conversing, we forget
All times, and toil, and care ;
Labor is rest, and pain is sweet,
If thou, my God, art here.

Here then, O Lord, vouchsafe to stay,
 And bid my heart rejoice ;
 My gladdened heart shall own thy sway,
 And echo to thy voice.

Thou callest me to seek thy face ;
 'T is all I wish to seek ;
 To attend the whispers of thy grace,
 And hear thee only speak.

HYMN. EDMESTON.

V.

My Father, thou art love ;
 O hide not from my view !
 But when I look in prayer, above,
 Appear in mercy through !

My pathway is not hid ;
 Thou knowest all my need ;
 And I would do as Israel did —
 Follow where thou wilt lead.

Lead me, and then my feet
 Shall never never stray ;
 But safely I shall reach the seat
 Of happiness and day.

And, O from that bright throne,
 I shall look back and see,

The path I went, and that alone,
Was the right path for me.

SOLACE OF FAITH. Roscoe.

VI.

WHEN human hopes and joys depart,
I give thee, Lord, a contrite heart,
And on my weary spirit steal
The thoughts that pass all earthly weal.

I cast above my tearful eyes,
And muse upon the starry skies
And think that he who governs there
Still keeps me in his guardian care.

I gaze upon the opening flower,
Just moistened with the even shower ;
And bless the love which made it bloom,
To chase away my transient gloom.

I think, whene'er this mortal frame
Returns again from whence it came,
My soul shall wing its happy flight
To regions of eternal light.

PRAYER. ANONYMOUS.

VII.

O THOU that hearest prayer !
 Attend our humble cry ;
 And let thy servants share,
 Thy blessing from on high ;
 We plead the promise of thy word,
 Grant us thy Holy Spirit, Lord !

If earthly parents hear
 Their children when they cry ;
 If they with love sincere,
 Their children's wants supply ;
 Much more wilt thou thy love display,
 And answer when thy children pray.

Our heavenly Father, thou —
 We — children of thy grace —
 O let thy Spirit now
 Descend and fill this place ;
 So shall we feel the heavenly flame,
 And all unite to praise thy name.

THE LORD'S PRAYER. SAC. OFFERING.

VIII.

OUR Father who in heaven art,
 All hallowed be thy name !

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
In earth and heaven the same.

Give us this day our daily bread ;
Our trespasses forgive,
As those who trespass against us,
Our pardon shall receive.

Into temptation lead us not,
Deliver us from ill ;
For thine the kingdom, thine the power,
And thine the glory still !

MORNING HYMN. Roscoe.

IX.

AGAIN from calm and sweet repose,
I rise to hail the dawn ;
Again my waking eyes unclose,
To view the smiling morn.

Great God of love ! thy praise I 'll sing,
For thou hast safely kept
My soul beneath thy guardian wing,
And watched me while I slept.

Glory to thee, eternal Lord !
O teach my heart to pray,
And thy blest Spirit's help afford,
To guide me through the day.

Let every thought and word accord
 With thy most holy will ;
 Each deed the precepts of thy word
 Religiously fulfil !

From danger, sin, and every ill,
 My constant guardian prove ;
 Oh sanctify my heart and fill
 With thoughts of holy love.

PRAYER. ANONYMOUS.

X.

LORD ! when we bend before thy throne,
 And our confession pour,
 Teach us to feel the sins we own
 And hate what we deplore.

Our broken spirit pitying see ;
 True penitence impart ;
 Then let a kindlier glance from thee
 Beam hope on every heart.

When we disclose our wants in prayer,
 May we our wills resign,
 And not a thought our bosom share,
 That is not wholly thine.

May faith each weak petition fill,
 And raise it to the skies,

And teach our hearts 't is goodness still
That grants it, or denies.

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE. KELLY.

XI.

God of our salvation, hear us ;
Bless, oh bless us ere we go ;
When we join the world, be near us,
Lest we cold and careless grow ;
Father keep us —
Keep us safe from every foe.

As our steps are drawing nearer,
To the place we call our home,
May our view of heaven grow clearer,
Hope more bright of joys to come ;
And, when dying
May thy presence cheer the gloom.

A PRAYER. ANONYMOUS.

XII.

FATHER, in thy name, assembling,
We thy children now draw near,
Teach us to rejoice with trembling ;
Speak, and let thy servants hear, —
Hear with meekness —
Learn thy word with godly fear,

While our days on earth, are lengthened,
Let us give them Lord to thee ;
Cheered by hope and daily strengthened,
We would run nor weary be,
Till thy glory,
Without clouds in heaven we see.

There in worship, purer, sweeter,
All thy people shall adore ;
Tasting of enjoyment greater
Than they could conceive before ;
Full enjoyment —
Holy bliss, for evermore.

REST IN GOD. HEMANS.

XIII.

CALM on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit, rest thee now !
E'en while thy footsteps trod,
His zeal was on thy brow.

Dust to its narrow house, beneath !
Soul to its place on high !
They that have seen thy look in death,
No more may fear to die.

DEPARTURE OF FRIENDS. MONTGOMERY.

XIV.

FRIEND after friend departs ;
Who hath not lost a friend ?
There is no union here of hearts,
That finds not here an end ;
Were this frail world our only rest,
Living or dying none were blest.

Reyond the flight of time,
Beyond this vale of death,
There surely is some blessed clime,
Where life is not a breath,
Nor life's affections transient fire,
Whose sparks fly upward to expire.

There *is* a world above,
Where parting is unknown ;
A whole eternity of love,
Formed for the good alone ;
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that happier sphere.

Thus star by star declines,
Till all are passed away,
As morning high and higher shines,
To pure and perfect day ;
Nor sink those stars in empty night,
They hide themselves in heaven's own light.

A PRAYER. ANONYMOUS.

XV.

My heavenly Father, and my Lord,
 To thee I lift mine eyes,
 Teach and instruct me by thy word,
 And make me truly wise.

Make me to know and understand
 Thy whole revealed will ;
 Fain would I learn to comprehend
 Thy love more clearly still.

O may thy word my thoughts engage, —
 In each perplexing case,
 Help me to feed on every page,
 And grow in every grace.

O let it purify my heart,
 And guide me all my days,
 Thy wonders, Lord, to me impart,
 And thou shalt have the praise.

THE PENITENT. MONTGOMERY.

XVI.

THOU, Lord, wilt look on him who lies
 A suppliant at thy feet ;
 And hearken to the feeblest cries,
 That reach thy mercy seat.

Between the cherubims of old,
Thy glory was expressed ;
But God, in Christ, we now behold,
In flesh made manifest.

Through him who all our sickness felt,
Who all our sorrows bears ;
Through him, in whom thy fulness dwelt,
We offer up our prayers.

GOODNESS IMPERISHABLE. HERBERT.

XVII.

SWEET Day ! so cool, so calm, so bright,
Bridal of earth and sky ;
The dew shall weep thy fall to night,
For thou, alas ! must die.

Sweet Rose ! in air whose odors wave,
And color charms the eye ;
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou, alas ! must die.

Sweet Spring ! of days and roses made,
Whose charms for beauty vie,
Thy days depart, thy roses fade,
Thou too, alas ! must die.

Only a pure and noble soul
Hath tints that never fly ;

While flowers decay, and seasons roll,
It lives and cannot die.

WHAT IS PRAYER MONTGOMERY.

XVIII.

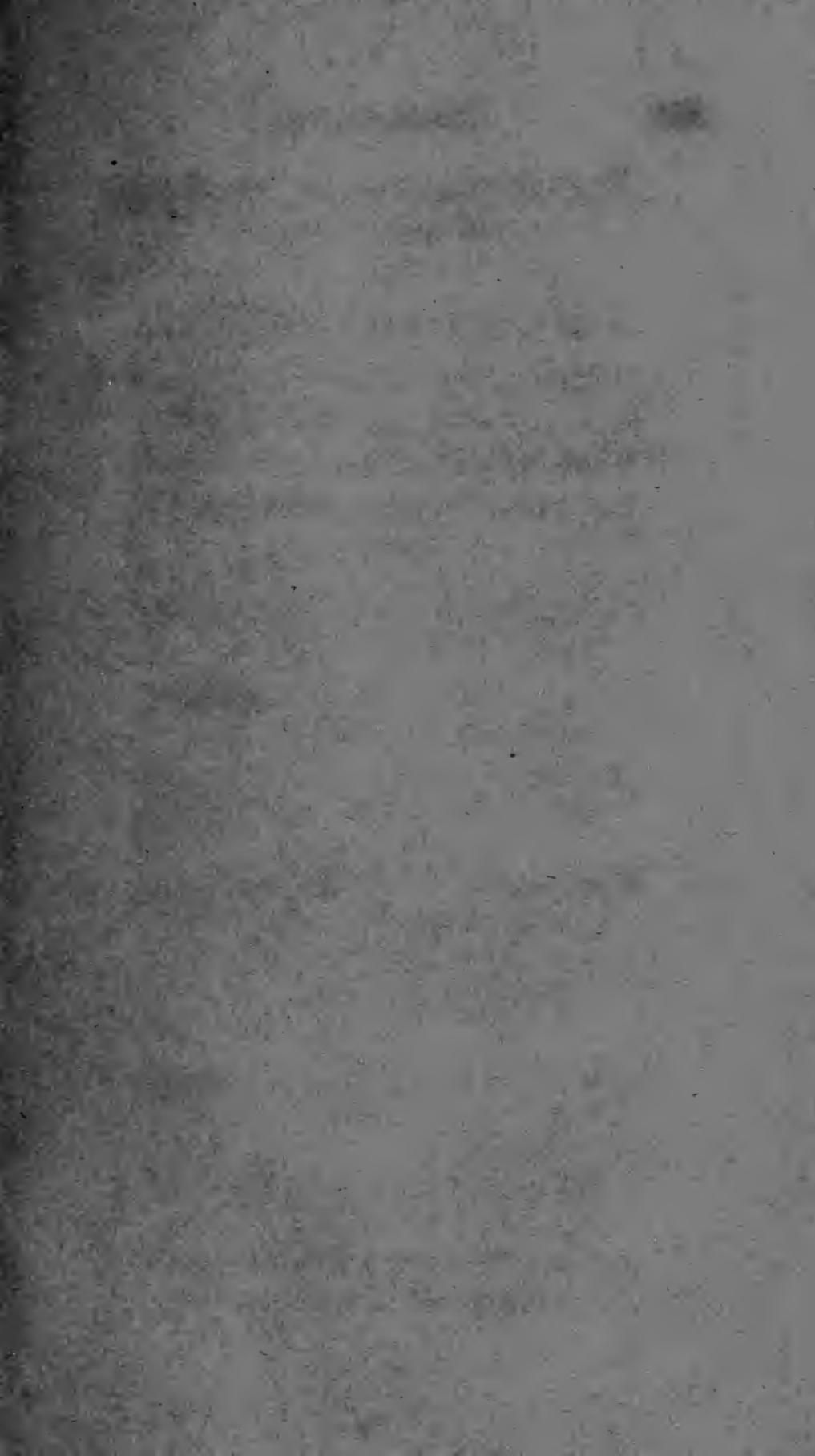
PRAYER is the burthen of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gate of death,
He enters heaven with prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways ;
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And say, " Behold he prays ! "

THE END.





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